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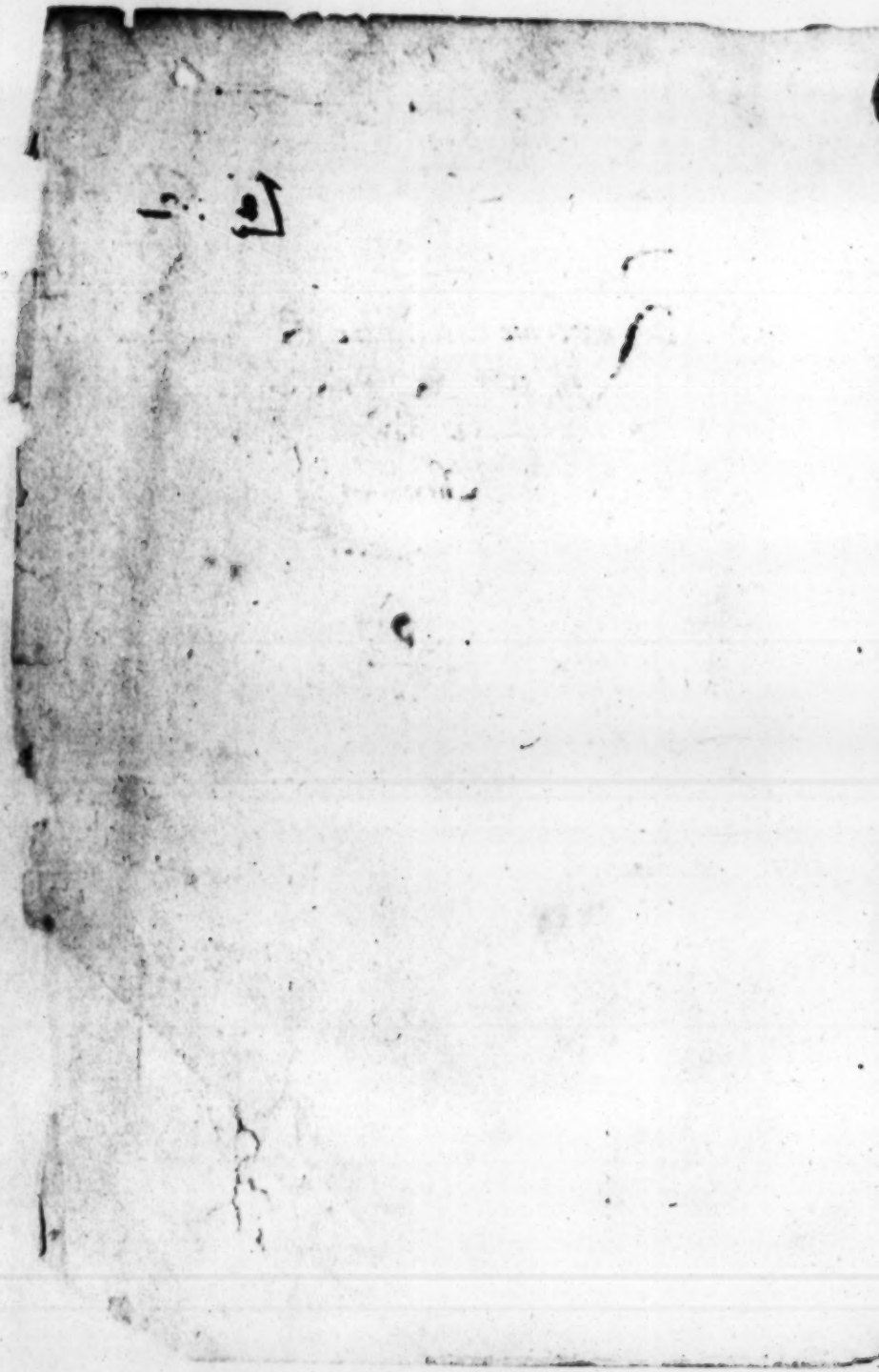

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A DISCOVRSE OF *Conſcience:*

Wherein is ſet downe the nature, properties, and differences thereof: as alſo the way to *Get and keepe good Conſcience.*

Printed by Iohn Legate, Printer *to the Vniverſitie* of *Cambridge.*

1596

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TO THE *RIGHT HONOURABLE* SIR VVILLIAM PIRIAM Knight, Lord chiefe Baron *of her Maiesties Exchequer*. Grace and peace.

RIght Honourable, it can not be vnknowne to your selfe, or to any man of a daies experience, that it is thought a small matter to commit a sinne, or, to lie in sinns against a mans owne conscience. For many vvhen they are told of their dutie in this point, replie and say, What tell you me of conscience? Conscience was hanged long agoe. *But vnles they take better heed, and preuent the danger by repentance, Hanged-conscience vvill revive and become both gibbet and hangman to them either in this life or the life to come. For Conscience is appointed of God to declare and put*

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in execution his iust iudgement against sinners: and as God cannot possibly be ouercome of man, so neither can the iudgement of conscience being the iudgement of God be wholly extinguished. Indeed Satan for his part goes about by al meanes he can, to benumme the conscience: but all is nothing. For as the sicke man, vvhen he seemes to sleepe and take his rest, is inwardly full of troubles; so the benummed and drowsie conscience wants not his secret pangs and terrours; and whē it shal be roused by the iudgement of God, it waxeth cruell and fierce like a wild beast. Again, whē a man sinnes against his conscience, as much as in him lieth, he plungeth himselfe into the gulfe of desperation: for euery wound of the conscience, though the smart of it be little felt, is a deadly wound: and he that goes on to sinne against his conscience, stabbes and vvounds it often in the same place: and all renewed wounds (as we know) are hardly or neuer cured. Thirdly, he that lieth in sinnes against his conscience, cannot call vpon the name of God: for guiltie conscience makes a man flie frō God. And Christ saith, God heareth not sinners, *vnderstanding by sinners, such as goe on in their owne waies against conscience: and what can be more dolefull then to be barred of the invocation of Gods name? Lastly, such persons after the last iudgement, shall haue not*

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onely their bodies in torment, but the vvorme in the soule and conscience shall neuer die: and what will it profit a man to gain the whole world by doing things against his owne conscience, and loose his owne soule.

Now that men on this manner carelesse touching conscience, may see their follie and the great danger thereof and come to amendment; I haue penned this small treatise: and according to the auncient and laudable custome, as also according to my long intended purpose, I now dedicate and present the same to your Lordship. The reasons vvhich haue imboldened me to this enterprise (all by-respects excluded) are these. Generall doctrine in points of religion is darke and obscure, and very hardly practised vvithout the the light of particular examples: and therefore the doctrine of conscience, by due right pertaines to a man of conscience; such an one as your Lordship is, who (others of like place not excepted) haue obtained this mercy at Gods hand to keepe faith and good conscience. Againe, considering that iustice and conscience haue alwaies bin friends: I am induced to thinke that your Lordship beeing publickly set apart for the execution and maintenance of civill iustice, will approoue and accept a Treatise propounding rules and precepts of conscience. Thus therefore craving pardon for

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my boldnes, and hoping of your Lordships good acceptance, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace. 1596. Iune 14.

Your Lordships
to command,
W. Perkins.

OF CONSCIENCE.

CAP. I.

What conſcience is.

CONſcience is a part of the vnderſtanding in all reaſonable creatures; determining of their particular actions either with them or againſt them.

I ſay conſcience is a part of the vnderſtanding, and I ſhew it thus. God in framing of the ſoule placed in it two principall faculties, *Vnderſtanding* and *will*. Vnderſtanding is that faculte in the ſoule whereby we vſe reaſon: and it is the more principall part ſeruing to rule and order the whole man, and therefore it is placed in the ſoule to be as the wagginer in the waggin. The Will is an other faculte, whereby we doe will or nill any thing, that is, chooſe or refuſe it. With the will is ioyned ſundrie affections, as ioy, ſorrow, loue, hatred, &c.

whereby we imbrace or eschew that which is good or euill. Now, conscience is not placed in the affections nor will, but in the vnderstanding, because the actions thereof stand in the vse of reason. Vnderstanding againe hath two parts. The first is that which stands in the view and contemplation of *truth* and *falshood*, and goes no further. The second is that which stands in the view and consideration of euery particular action, to search whether it be *good* or *badde*. The first is called the *Theorical*, the second the *practical vnderstanding*. And vnder this latter is conscience to be comprehended: because his propertie is to iudge of the goodnes or badnes of things or actions done.

Againe I say that conscience is a [b] part of the minde or vnderstanding, to shewe that conscience is not a bare knowledge or iudgement of the vnderstanding (as [c] men commonly write) but a naturall power, facultie, or created qualitie from whence knowledge and iudgement proceede as effects. This the Scriptures confirme in that they ascribe sundrie workes and actions to conscience, as accusing, excusing, comforting, terrifying. Which actions could not thence proceede, if conscience were no more but an action or act of the minde. Indeede I graunt, it may be taken for a certen actuall knowledge, which

[b] Vnderstanding hath no parts properly but by analogie in respect of divers obiects & actions.

[c] *Thom. Aquin. part. 1. q. 79. art. 13. Dominic. Bannes* on this place. *Antoninus, &c.*

which is the effect thereof: but to ſpeake properly, this knowledge muſt proceede of a power in the ſoule, the propertie whereof is to take the principles and conclusions of the minde and applie thē, & by applying either to accuſe or excuſe. This is the ground of all, and this I take to be conſcience. If it be obiected that conſcience cannot be a naturall power, becauſe it may be loſt: I anſwer if conſcience be loſt, it is onely in reſpect of the vſe thereof, as reaſon is loſt in the drunken man, and not otherwiſe.

I adde, that the proper ſubiects of conſcience are reaſonable creatures; that is, men and angels. Hereby conſcience is excluded firſt of all from bruit beaſts; for though they haue life & ſenſe, & in many things ſome ſhadows of reaſon, yet becauſe they want true reaſon, they want conſcience alſo. Secondly from God the creator, who beeing righteouſnes it ſelfe, needeth not conſcience to order & gouerne his actions. And wheras Peter ſaith, 1. Pet. 2. 19. that men muſt indure griefe wrongfully *for conſcience of God*, his meaning is not to ſhewe that God hath conſcience, but that men are to ſuffer many wrōgs becauſe their *cōſciences* do bind thē, in ſo doing to obay Gods wil, which conſcience directly reſpecteth.

And I ſay that conſcience is in *all reaſonable creatures*, that none might imagine that ſome

men by nature haue conscience in them, some none at all. For as many men as there are, so many consciences there be: and euery particular man hath his owne particular conscience.

The proper ende of conscience is, to determine of things done. And by this one thing, conscience is distinguished from all other gifts of the minde, as *intelligence, opinion, science, faith, prudence*. *Intelligence* simply conceiues a thing to be or not to be: *science* iudgeth it to be certen and sure: *faith* is a perswasion, whereby we beleeue things that are not: *prudence* discerneth what is meete to be done, what to be left vndone; but *conscience* goes further yet then all these: for it determines or giues sentence of things done, by saying vnto vs, This was done, this was not done: this may be done, this may not be done: this was wel done, this was ill done.

opinion is of a thinge to be probable or contingent.

The things that conscience determines of, are a mans owne actions: his owne actions, I say. To be certen what an other man hath saide or done, is commonly called knowledge: but for a man to be certen what he himselfe hath done or saide, that is conscience. Againe conscience meddles not with generals, onely it deales in particular actions: and that, not in some fewe, but in all.

The manner of consciences determination, is

is to set downe his iudgement either with the creature or against it: I adde this clause, because conscience is of a diuine nature, and is a thing placed by God in the middest betweene him and man, as an arbitratour to giue sentence and to pronounce either with man or against man vnto God. For otherwhiles, it consents and speakes with God against the man in whome it is placed: otherwhiles againe it consents with him and speakes for him before the Lord. And hence comes one reason of the name of conscience. *Scire*, to know, is of one man alone by himselfe: and *conscire* is, when two at the least know some one secret thing; either of them knowing it togither with the other. Therefore the name *συνείδησις*, or *Conscientia* conscience, is that thing that combines two togither, and makes them partners in the knowledge of one and the same secret. Now man and man, or man and Angel can not be combined; because they can not know the secret of any man vnlesse it be reuealed to them: it remaines therefore that this combination is onely betweene man and God. God knowes perfectly all the doings of man, though they be neuer so hid and concealed: and man by a gift giuē him of God, knows togither with God, the same things of himselfe: and this gift is named Conscience.

CAP. II.

Of the duties of conscience.

§ 1. of the testimonie of conscience.

THe proper actions or duties of conscience are twofold, to giue testimonie or to giue iudgement. Rom. 2.15.

Conscience giues testimonie by determining that a thing was done or it was not done, Rom. 2. 15. *Their conscience also bearing witnes.* 2. Cor. 1. 12. *Our reioycing is the testimonie of our conscience, that in, &c.*

Here we must consider three things: I. of what things conscience beares witnes: II. in what manner: III. how long.

For the first, conscience beares witnesse of our thoughts, of our affections, of our outward actions.

That it beares witnes of our secret thoughts, it appeares by the solemne protestation which at some time men vse: *In my conscience I never thought it*: whereby they signifie that they think something, or they thinke it not, and that their consciences can tell what they thinke. Neither must this seeme strange. For there must be two actions of the vnderstanding, the one is simple, which

which barely conceiueth or thinketh this or that: the other is *a reflecting* or doubling of the former, whereby a man conceiues and thinkes with himselfe what he thinks. And this action properly pertaines to the conscience. The minde thinks a thought, now conscience goes beyond the minde, and knowes what the minde thinks; so as if a man would go about to hide his sinnefull thoughts from God, his conscience as an other person within him, shall discouer all. By meanes of this second action conscience may beare witnes euen of thoughts, and from hence also it seemes to borrow his name, because conscience is a *science* or knowledge ioyned with an other knowledge: for by it I conceiue and know what I know.

Conscientia à scientia cum alia scientia.

Againe, conscience beares witnes what the wills and affections of men be in euery matter, Rom. 9.1. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not*, my conscience *bearing me witnes in the holy Ghost, that I haue great heauines and continuall sorrow in my heart: for I could wish my selfe to be separate from Christ for my brethren.*

Lastly it witnesseth what be mens actions. Eccles. 7.24. *Oftentimes also thine heart knoweth*, [that is, conscięce witnesseth] *that thou likewise hast cursed others.*

The manner that conscience vseth in giuing

testimonie standes in two things. First it obserues and takes notice of all things that we doe: secondly, it doth inwardly and secretly within the heart, tell vs of them all. In this respect it may fitly be compared to a notarie, or a register that hath alwaies the penne in his hand, to note and record whatsoeuer is saide or done: who also because he keepes the rolles and records of the court, can tell what hath bin said and done many hundred yeares past.

Touching the third point. How long conscience beares witnes, it doth it continually; not for a minut, or a day, or a moneth, or a yeare, but for euer: when a man dies, conscience dieth not; when the bodie is rotting in the graue, conscience liueth and is safe and sound: and when we shall rise againe, conscience shall come with vs to the barre of Gods iudgement, either to accuse or excuse vs before God, Rom. 2.15, 16. *Their conscience bearing witnes at the day when God shall iudge the secrets of men by Iesus Christ.*

By this first dutie of conscience, we are to learne three things. The first, that there is a God: and we may be lead to the sight of this euen by very reason. For conscience beares witnesse. Of what? Of thy particular doings. But against whome or with whome doth it giue testimonie? thou maist feele in thy heart that it doth it either

either with thee or againſt thee. And to whom is it a witneſſe? To men or Angels? that can not be, for they can not heare the voice of conſcience, they can not receiue conſciences teſtimony, nay they can not ſee what is in the heart of man. It remaines therefore that there is a ſpirituall ſubſtance, moſt wiſe, moſt holy, moſt mighty, that ſees all things to whom conſcience beares record; and that is God himſelfe. Let Atheiſts barke againſt this as long as they will: they haue that in them which will convince them of the truth of the godhead will they nill they, either in life or death.

Secondly we learne, that God doth watch ouer all men by a ſpeciall prouidence. The maſter of a priſon is knowen by this to haue care ouer his priſoners, if hee ſend keepers with them to watch them and to bring them home againe in time convenient: and ſo Gods care to man is manifeſt in this, that when he created man and placed him in the worlde, he gaue him conſcience to be his keeper to follow him alwaies at the heeles & to dogge him (as we ſay) & to pry into his actions & to beare witneſſe of them all.

Thirdly hence we may obſerue Gods goodneſſe and loue to man. If he do any thing amiſſe, he ſets his conſcience firſt of all to tell him of it ſecretly: if then he amende, God forgives it: if

not,

not, then afterward conscience must openly accuse him for it at the barre of Gods iudgement before all the saints and angels in heauen.

The second worke of conscience is to giue iudgement of things done.

¶ 2. Of consciences iudgement.

To giue iudgemẽt is to determine, that a thing is well done or ill done. Herein conscience is like to a Iudge that holdeth an assize and takes notice of inditements, and causeth the most notorious malefactour that is to hold up his hand at the barre of his iudgement. Nay it is (as it were) a little god sitting in the middle of mens hearts arraigning them in this life as they shall be arraigned for their offences at the tribunall seate of the euerliuing god in the day of iudgement. Wherfore the temporary iudgement that is giuen by the conscience is nothing els but a beginning or a fore-runner of the last iudgement.

Hence we are admonished to take special heed that nothing past lie heavy upon vs, & that we charge not our cõsciences in time to come with any matter. For if our conscience accuse us, god will much more condemne vs, saith S. Iohn. 1. Ioh. 3. 18. because he seeth all our actions more clearely and iudgeth them more seuerely then conscience can. It shall be good therfore for all men to labour that they may say with Paul, 2. Cor. 4. *I knowe nothing by my selfe*, that they

may

may ſtand before God without blame for euer.

Here we muſt conſider two things: firſt, the cauſe that makes conſcience giue iudgement: ſecondly, the manner how.

The cauſe is the Binder of the conſcience, The Binder is that thing whatſoeuer which hath power & authority ouer conſcience to order it. §3. Of the binding of the conſcience.

To bind, is to vrge, cauſe, and conſtraine it in euery action either to accuſe for ſinne, or to excuſe for well doing: or to ſay, this may be done or it may not be done.

Conſcience is ſaid to be bound as it is conſidered a part by it ſelfe from the binding power of gods cõmandement. For then it hath liberty & is not bound either to accuſe or excuſe, but is apt to do either of them indifferently: but when the binding power is ſet once ouer the cõſciẽce, thẽ in euery actiõ it muſt needs either accuſe or excuſe: euẽ as a man in a city or town hauing his liberty, may go vp & down or not go, where & when he will: but if his body be attached by the magiſtrate & impriſoned, thẽ his former liberty is reſtrained, & he can go up and downe but within the priſon or ſome other allowed place.

The binder of conſcience is either proper or improper. Proper is that thing which hath abſolute and ſoueraigne power in it ſelfe to bind the conſcience. And that is the worde of God writtẽ in the books of the old & new Teſtamẽt.

Reason. I. He which is the Lord of conscience by his word and lawes bindes conscience: but God is the only Lorde of conscience, because he once created it, and he alone gouernes it and none but he knowes it. Therfore his word and lawes only bind conscience properly. II. He which hath power to saue or destroy the soule for the keeping or breaking of his lawes, hath absolute power to bind the soul and conscience by the same lawes: but the first is true of God alone, Iam.3.12. *There is one lawgiver which is able to save and destroy.* Isai.33.22. *The Lorde is our Iudge, the Lord is our lawgiuer, the Lorde is our King, and he will save vs.* Therefore the worde of God alone by an absolute and soueraigne power binds conscience. Because this point is cleare of it selfe, further proofe is needlesse.

Hēce we are taught sundry points of instruction. I. Such as are ignorāt amōg us must labor to get knowledge of gods worde, because it binds cōscience. Neither wil the plea of ignorāce serue for excuse: because whether we know gods laws or know them not, they stil bind us. And we are bound not only to do them, but whē we know them not, we are further bound not to be ignorant of them, but to seeke to know them. If we had no more sinnes our ignorance were sufficient

ent to condemne vs. II. Gods word is to be obeyed though we ſhould offend all men; yea looſe all mens fauour, and ſuffer the greateſt domage that may be, euen the loſſe of our liues. And the reaſon is at hand; becauſe gods worde hath this prerogatiue to bridle, bind, & reſtraine the conſcience. III. Whatſoeuer we enterpriſe or take in hand, we muſt firſt ſearch whether God giue vs liberty in conſcience and warrant to do it. For if we do otherwiſe, conſcience is bound preſently to charge vs of ſinne before god. Laſtly we do here ſee how dangerous the caſe is of all time-ſeruers that will liue as they liſt and be of no certen religion till differences and diſſentions therein be ended, and they haue the determination of a generall counſell: for whether theſe things come to paſſe or no, certen it is that they are bound in conſcience to receiue and beleeue the ancient, Prophetical, and Apoſtolicall doctrine touching the true worſhip of god and the way to life euerlaſting, which is the true religion. The ſame is to be ſaid of all drowſie proteſtants and lukewarme-goſpellers that vſe religion not with that care and conſcience they ought, but only then and ſo far forth as it ſerues for their turnes, commonly negleating or deſpiſing the aſſemblies where the word is preached: and ſeldome frequenting the

Lords

Lords table vnles it be at Easter. Like silly wretches they neither see nor feele the constraining power that gods word hath in their cõsciences.

Gods word is either Law or Gospel. The law is a part of Gods word of things to be done or to be left vndone. And it is threefold, morall, iudiciall, ceremoniall.

§4. Of the morall law binding.

Morall law concernes duties of loue partly to God & partly towards our neighbour: it is contained in the decalogue or 10. commandements: & it is the very law of nature written in all mens hearts (for substance though not for the maner of propounding of it) in the creation of man: & therfore it binds the consciences of all men at all times, euen of blind and ignorant persons that neither know: the most of it nor care to know it. Yet here must be remembred 3. exceptions or cautions. I. When two commandements of the morall law are opposite in respect of vs: so as we can not do them both at the same time: then the lesser commandement giues place to the greater & doth not bind for that instant. Example. I. God commands one thing, & the magistrate commaunds the flat contrary: in this case which of these two commandements must be obeyed, Honour God, or, [b] Honour the Magistrate? the answer is, that the latter must giue place to the former, & the former must only be obey-

[b] 5. Com.

obeyed: Act. 4.19. *whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you rather then God, judge ye.*

II. The 4. commandement prescribes rest on the Sabbath day: now it fals out that at the same time a whole towne is set on fire, and the sixt commandement requires our help in sauing our neighbours life & goods. Now of these two cõmandements which must be obeyed? for both can not. The answer is, that the fourth commandement at this time is to giue place, & the sixt commandement alone binds the conscience: so as then (if need should require) a man might labour all the day without offence to God. Matt. 9.13. *I will have mercie & not sacrifice.* And the rule must not be omitted, That charity towards our neighbour is subordinate to the Loue of God, & therfore must giue place to it. For this cause the commandement concerning Charity must giue place to the cõmandement cõcerning loue to god: & when the case so fals out, that we must either offend our neighbour or God, we must rather offend our neighbour then God.

II. Caution. When God giues some particular cõmandement to his people, dispensing with some other cõmandement of the moral law: for that time it binds not. For all the 10. cõmandements must be cõceiued with this conditiõ, Except god cõmand otherwise. Exãple. I. The sixt

comman-

commandement is, Thou shalt not kill: but God giues a particular commandemẽt to Abraham. Abrahã offer thy sonne Isaac in sacrifice to me. And this latter cõmandement at that instant did bind Abraham: & he is therefore commended for his obedience to it. II. And when God commanded the children of Israel to compasse Iericó seuen daies and therefore on the Sabbath, the fourth commandement prescribing the sanctifying of rest on the Sabbath for that instant and in that action did not bind conscience.

III. Caution. One and the same commandement in some things binds the conscience more strictly, and in doing some other things lesse. Galat. 6. 10. *Doe good to all men, but specially to them that be of the houshold of faith*. Hence it arisetb, that though all sinnes be mortall and deserue eternall death, yet all are not equall, but some more grieuous then others.

§ 5. Of Iudicials binding.

Iudiciall lawes of Moses are all such as prescribe order for the execution of iustice and iudgement in the common-wealth. They were specially given by God, & directed to the Iewes: who for this very cause were bound in conscience to keepe them all; and if the common-wealth of the Iewes were now standing in the old estate, no doubt they should continue still to bind as before.

But

But touching other nations and specially Christian common-wealths in these daies, the case is otherwise. Some are of opinion, that the whole iudiciall law is wholly abolished: and some againe runne to the other extreme, holding that Iudiciall lawes binde Christians as straightly as Iewes: but no doubt, they are both wide; and the safest course, is to keepe the meane betweene both. Therefore the Iudiciall lawes of Moses according to the substance and scope thereof must be distinguished; in which respects they [b] are of two sorts. Some of them are lawes of particular equity, some of [c] common equity. Lawes of particular equity, are such as prescribe iustice according to the particular estate and condition of the Iewes common-wealth & to the circumstances thereof: time, place, persons, things, actions. Of this kind was the law, that brother should raise vp seed to his brother, and many such like: & none of them bind vs because they were framed and tempered to a particular people.

[b] Iuris particularis.

[c] Iuris communis.

Iudicials of common equity are such as are made according to the law or instinct of nature common to all men: and these, in respect of their substance, binde the consciences not onely of the Iewes but also of the Gentiles: for they were not giuen to the Iewes as they are Iewes,

 that

that is, a people receiued into the couenant aboue all other nations, brought from Egypt to the land of Canaan, of whome the Messias according to the flesh was to come: but they were giuen to them as they were mortall men subiect to the order and lawes of nature as all other nations are. Againe iudiciall lawes, so farre forth as they haue in them the generall or common equity of the lawe of nature are morall: and therfore binding in conscience, as the morall law.

A Iudiciall law may be knowen to be a law of common equity, if either of these two things be found in it: First, if wise men not onely among the Iewes, but also in other nations haue by naturall reason and conscience iudged the same to be equall, iust, and necessary: and withall, haue testified this their iudgement by ordaining lawes for their common-wealthes, the same in substance with sundry of the Iudiciall lawes giuen to the Iewes: and the Romane Emperours among the rest haue done this most excellently, as will appeare by conferring their lawes with the lawes of God. Secondly a Iudiciall hath common equitie, if it serue directly to explane and confirme any of the terme precepts of the Decalogue: or, if it serue directly to maintaine and vphold any of

the three estates of the family, the common-wealth, the Church. And whether this be so or no, it will appeare, if we doe but consider the matter of the lawe, and the reasons or considerations vpon which the Lord was mooued to giue the same unto the Iewes. Now to make the point in hand more plaine, take an example or two. It is a Iudiciall law of God that murderers must be put to death: now the question is whether this law for substance be the common equity of nature binding consciences of Christians or no? and the answer is, that without further doubting it is so. For first of all, this law hath bin by common consent of wise lawgiuers enacted in many countries and kingdomes beside the Iewes. It was the lawe of the Egyptians and [e] olde Grecians of Draco, of Numa, and of many of the Romane [d] Emperours. Secondly this lawe serues directly to maintaine obedience to the sixt commandement: and the consideration upon which the law was made is so weighty that without it a common-wealth can not stand. The murderers bloode must be shedde (saieth the Lorde Numb.35.v.33,34.) *because the whole lande is defiled with blood*, and remaineth vnclensed, till his blood be shed. Againe it was a iudiciall law among the Iewes that the adulterer & adultereſſe

[e] *Eurip. in Hecuba.*
[d] *Theodos. & Arcbad. lib. 3. C. de Episc. audien.*

should die the death; now let the question be whether this law concerne other nations as being deriued from the common law of nature: and it seemes to be so, For first wise men by the light of reason and natural conscience haue iudged this punishment equall and iust. Iudah before this Iudiciall law was giuen by Moses, appointed Tamar his daughter in law to be burnt to death for playing the whore. Nabuchadnezzar burnt Echad and Zedechias because they committed adultery with their neighbours wiues. By Dracons law among the Grecians this sinne was death, and also by the law of the Romans. Againe, this law seemes directly to maintaine necessary obedience to the seuenth commandement: and the considerations upon which this law was giuen are perpetual, & serue to vphold the common wealth. Lev. 20. 22. *Yee* (saith the Lord) *shall keep all mine ordinances & my iudgements* (the law of adultery being one of them.) Now marke the reasons. 1. *Least the land spue you out.* 2. *For the same sinnes I haue abhorred the nations.*

Gen. 38. 24.

Iere. 29. 23.

Inst. l. Item lex Iulian. de publ. iudiciis.

§ 6. Of ceremoniall lawe binding.

The ceremoniall law is that which prescribes rites & orders in the outward worship of God. It must be cõsidered in three times. The first is time before the comming & death of Christ: the second, the time of publishing the gospell by the

Aug. epist. 19. ad Hier.

the Apostles: the third, the time after the publishing of the Gospell.

In the first, it did bind the consciences of the Iewes, & the obedience of it was the true worship of God. But it did not then bind the consciences of the Gentils, for it was the partition wall betwene them and the Iewes. And it did continue to bind the Iewes till the very death and ascension of Christ. For then the hand writing of ordinances which was against vs was nailed on the crosse & cancelled. And when Christ saith, that *the law and the prophets endured till Iohn*, Luk.16.16. his meaning is not, that the ceremoniall law ended then: but that things foretold by the prophets, and obscurely prefigured by the ceremoniall law, began then more plainly to be preached and made manifest.

The second time was from the ascension of Christ, till about the time of the destruction of the Temple and city: in which, ceremonies ceased to bind conscience and remained indifferent. Hereupon Paul circumcised Timothy: the Apostles after Christs ascension, as occasion was offered were present in the Temple, Act. 3. 1. And the councill of Hierusalem tendering the weakenesse of some beleeuers, decreed that the Church for a time should abstaine frō strangled & blood. And there was good reason of this,

because the Church of the Iewes was not yet sufficiently conuicted that an end was put to the ceremoniall law by the death of Christ.

In the third time, which was after the publishing of the Gospell, ceremonies of the Iewes Church became unlawfull, and so shall continue to the worlds end.

By this it appeares what a monstrous and miserable religion the Church of Rome teacheth, and maintaines; which standes wholy in ceremonies, partly heathenish, and partly Iewish.

§7. Of the gospell binding.

As for the Gospel, I take it for that part of the word of God which promiseth righteousnesse and life euerlasting to all that beleeue in Christ, and withall commandeth this faith.

That we may the better know, how the gospell binds conscience, two points must be considered: one touching the persons bound, the other touching the manner of binding.

Persons are of two sorts; some be called, some be uncalled. Persons called are all such to whom God in mercy hath offered the meanes of saluation, and hath reuealed the doctrine of the gospell in some measure more or lesse by meanes either ordinary or extraordinary. All such I thinke are straightly bounde in conscience to beleeue and obey the Gospell. For that word of God, whereby men shall be iudged in the

day

day of iudgement, must first of all binde their consciences in this life, considering absolution and condemnation is according to that which is done in this life: but by the Gospell, all men that haue beene called, shall be iudged as Paul saith, Roman. 2. 16. *God shall iudge the secrets of men by Iesus Christ, according to my Gospell.* And our Sauiour Christ saieth, *Hee that beleeueth hath life everlasting, hee which beleeueth not is alreadie condemned.* It remaines therfore, that the gospell binds the consciences of such men in this life. By this wee are all put in minde not to content our selues with this, that wee haue a liking to the Gospell, and doe beleeue it to be true (though many protestants in these our dayes thinke it sufficient both in life and death, if they holde that they are to be saved by faith alone in Christ without the merite of mans workes) but wee must goe yet further, and enter into a practise of the doctrine of the Gospell as well as of the precepts of the morall lawe; knowing that the gospell doeth as well binde conscience as the lawe, and if it be not obeyed will as well condemne.

Men vncalled, are such as neuer hearde of Christ by reason the gospell was neuer reuealed unto them, nor means of reuelatiõ offered. That

there haue bene such in former ages, I make it manifest thus. The worlde since the creation may be distinguished into foure ages. The first, from the creation to the floode: the second, from the flood to the giuing of the Lawe: the third, from the giuing of the law to the death of Christ: the fourth, from the death of Christ to the last iudgement. Now in the three former ages, there was a distinction of the world into two sorres of men, whereof one was a people of God, the other no people. In the first age in the families of Seth, Noe, &c. were the sonnes of God; in all other families the sonnes of men. Genes. 6. 2. In the second age were the sonnes of the flesh and the sonnes of the promise, Roman. 9. 7. In the thirde, Iewes and Gentils: the Iewes being the Church of God, all nations beside no church. But in the last age, this distinction was taken away whe the Apostles had a comission giuen them that was neuer giuen before to any, namely, to goe teach not only the Iewes but all nations. Now this distinction arose of this, that the gospell was not reuealed to the worlde before the comming of Christ, as the scriptures witnes. The Prophet Esai saith, 52. 14. that *kings shall shut their mouthes* at Christ, *because that which had not been told them they shal see, & that which they had not heard shall they*

they vnderſtād. And 55.5. *that a natiō that knew him not ſhall runne vnto him.* Paul ſaith of the Epheſians that in former times they were *without God* and *without Chriſt, ſtraungers from the couenant*, Eph. 2. 12. And to the Athenians he ſaith, *that the times* before the comming of Chriſt *were times of ignorance*, Act. 17. 30. And that it may not be thought that this ignorance was affected, Paul ſaith further that God *in times paſt ſuffered the Gentiles to walke in their owne waies*, Act. 14. 16. and that the *myſterie* of the Goſpel was *kept ſecret from the beginning of the world, and is now in the laſt age reuealed to the whole world*, Rom. 16. 25. Some alleadge that the Iewes beeing the Church of God, had trafficke with all nations, and by this meanes ſpred ſome little knowledge of the Meſsias thorough the whole world: I anſwer againe that the conference and ſpeach of Iewiſh marchants with forrainers was no ſufficient means to publiſh the promiſe of ſaluation by Chriſt to the whole world; firſt becauſe the Iewes for the moſt part haue alwaies bin more readie to receiue any new and falſe religion, then to teach their owne: ſecondly becauſe the very Iewes themſelues, though they were well acquainted with the ceremonies of their religion, yet the ſubſtance thereof which was Chriſt figured by

externall

external ceremonies, they knew not: and hereupon the Pharisies when they made a Prosolyte, they made him ten times more the childe of the deuill then themselues. Thirdly, because men are seldome or never suffered to professe or make any speach of their religion in forraine countries. Againe, if it be alleadged that the doctrine of the Gospel is set downe in the bookes of the old Testament, which men through the whole world might haue read, searched, and knowne if they would; I answer that the keeping of the bookes of the old Testament, was committed to the Iewes alone, Rom. 3. 2. and therefore they were not giuen to the whole world, as also the Psalmist testifieth, *He sheweth his word vnto Iacob, his statutes and his iudgements vnto Israel; he hath not dealt so with euery nation, neither haue they knowne his iudgements*, Psal. 147. 8.

Now touching such persons as haue not so much as heard of Christ, though they are apt & fit to be bound in conscience by the Gospel in as much as they are the creatures of God, yet are they not indeede actually bound till such time as the Gospel be reuealed or at the least meanes of reuelation offered. Reasons herof may be these: I. Whatsoeuer doctrine or law doth bind conscience, must in some part be knowne by nature

or by grace or by both: the vnderstanding must first of all conceiue, or at the least haue meanes of conceiuing, before conscience can constraine: because it bindeth by vertue of knowne conclusions in the minde. Therefore things that are altogether vnknowne and vnconceiued of the vnderstanding, doe not binde in conscience: now, the Gospel is altogether vnknowne and vnconceiued of many, as I haue alreadie prooued, and therefore it binds not them in conscience. IV. Paul saith, Rom. 2. 12. *They vvhich sinne vvithout the law* [written] *shall be condemned without the law*: therefore they which sinne without the Gospel, shall be condemned without the Gospel: and such as shall be condemned without the Gospel after this life, were not bound by it in this life. Augustine the most iudiciall Diuine of all the ancient fathers vpon these words of Christ, *but now they haue no excuse of their sinne*, saith on this manner, *A doubt may be moued vvhether they to whome Christ hath not come, neither hath spoken vnto them, haue an excuse for their sinne. For if they haue it not, vvhy is it said that these* [namely the Ievves] *haue no excuse because he came & spake to them? and if they haue it, whether it be that their punishment may be taken away quite, or in part lessened. To these demaundes according*

Ioh. 15. 20.

August. tract. 89. in Ioh.

cording to my capacitie as the Lord shall inable me I answer, that they to whome Christ came not, neither hath spoken vnto them, haue no excuse not of every sinne but of this sinne, that they haue not beleeued in Christ. Against, *it remaineth to inquire whether those, who before Christ came in his Church to the Gentiles, and before they heard his Gospel, haue bin or are preuented by death, may vse this excuse: Doubtlesse they may, but they shall not therefore escape damnation. For whosoeuer haue sinned without the law, shall perish without the law.*

As for the reasons which some of the schoolmen haue alleadged to the contrarie, they are answered all by [b] men of the same order, and I will briefly touch the principall. First it is obiected that the holy Ghost shall iudge *the world of sinne, because they haue not beleeued in Christ*, Ioh. 16. 9. I answer that by the *world* we must not vnderstand *all* and *every man* since the creation, but all nations and kingdomes in the last age of the world, to whome the Gospel was reuealed. Thus hath Paul expounded this word, Rom. 11. 12. *The fall of them is the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles.* v. 15. *The casting of them away is the reconciling of the world.* Secondly it is obiected that the law binds all men in conscience though

[b] Thom. 2. 2. q. 10. art. 1.

though the greatest part of it be vnknowne to them. *Answ.* The law was once giuen to Adam and imprinted in his heart in his first creation, and in him as beeing the roote of all mankinde, it was giuen to all men: and as when he sinned all men sinned in him, so when he was inlightened all were inlightened in him, and cõsequently when his conscience was bound by the law, all were bound in him. And though this knowledge be lost by mans default, yet the bond remaines still on Gods part. Nowe the case is otherwise with the Gospel, which was neuer written in mans nature, but was giuen after the fall, and is aboue nature. Here a further reply is made, that the covenant made with Adam, *The seede of the woman shall bruise the serpents head*, was also made with his seede which is all mankinde, and was afterward continued with Abraham to all nations. I answer againe, that Adam was a roote of mankinde onely in respect of *mans nature* with the *gifts* and *sinne* thereofhe was no root in respect of *grace* which is aboue nature, but Christ the second Adam. And therefore when God gaue the promise vnto him and faith to beleeue the promise, he did not in him giue them both to all mankind: neither, if Adam had afterward fallen frõ faith in the Messias, should all mankinde againe

haue

brane fallen in him. Moreover that the promise of grace was not made to Adams seede vniuersally but finally, it appeares; because when God did afterward renew the covenant, he restrained it to the familie of Noe and Abraham, and in Abrahams familie it was restrained to Isaac, *In Isaac* (saith the Lord) *shall thy seede be called*: yea in the very tenour of the covenant there is a distinction made of the seede of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which seede of the serpent is a* part of mankind, and it is excluded from the covenant. And whereas the Lord promised to Abraham that in his seede all the nations of the earth should be blessed, the promise must not be vnderstood of all men in every age, but of all nations in the last age of the world. And thus Paul hath cleared the text, Gal. 3.8. *The Scripture foreseeing that God would iustifie the Gentiles through faith* [which was done after Christs ascension] *he preached before the Gospel to Abraham, In thee shall nations be blessed.* Lastly it may be obiected, that if any man be ignorant of the doctrine of saluation by Christ, it is through his owne fault: it is true indeede that all ignorance of the doctrine of salvation comes through mans fault and sinne: but sinne must be distinguished; it is either personall, or the sinne of mans nature. Now

*1.Ioh.3.8.

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in them that neuer heard of Christ, their ignorance in this point proceedes not of any personall sinne in them, but onely from the sinne of mans nature, that is, the first sinne of Adam common to all mankinde, which sinne is punished when God leaues men wholly to themselues. Now many things there be in men proceeding from this sinne, which neuertheleſſe are no sinnes, as the manifold miseries of this life: & so I take the ignorance of things aboue mans nature altogether vnreuealed, to be no sinne but a punishment of originall sinne.

Thus much of the persons which are bound by the Gospel: now heare for how farre forth they are bound by it.

God in the Gospel generally reuealeth two points vnto vs: the first, that there is perfect righteousnes and life euerlasting to be obtained by Christ: the second, that the instrument to obtaine righteousnes and life eternall is faith in Christ. Moreouer when this Gospel is dispersed and preached vnto vs, God reuealeth vnto vs two points more: the first, that hee will make vs particularly to be partakers of true righteousneſſe and life euerlasting by Christ: the second, that hee will haue vs without doubting to beleeue thus much of our selues. And for this cause euery man to whom

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the Gospel is revealed, is bound to believe his own election, justification, sanctification, and glorification in and by Christ. The reasons and grounds of this point are of the word of God are these: I. 1. Joh. 3. 23. *This is his commandement that we believe in the name of his sonne Iesus Christ, and love one an other as he gave us commandement.* Now to believe in Christ, is not confusedly to believe that he is a redeemer of mankind, but withall to believe that he is my saviour, and that I am elected, justified, sanctified, and shall be glorified by him. This is granted of all men, yea of the Papists themselves, which otherwise are enemies of this doctrine. For Lumberd saith, *To believe in God is by believing to love, and as it were to goe into God: by believing to cleave unto him, and as it were to be incorporate into his members.* II. Paul, Gal. 2. 16. first of all propounds a generall sentence, *That a man is not justified by the workes of the law, but by the faith of Christ.* After ward he addes a speciall application, *Even we* (namely Iewes) *have believed in Iesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Iesus Christ*: and in v. 20. he descends more specially to apply the Gospel to himselfe, *I live* (saith he) *by the faith of the sonne of God, who hath loved me and given himselfe for me.* And in this kinde of application

Lumberd l. 3. dist. 23.

plication there is nothing peculiar to Paul, for in this very action of his he is an example vnto vs, 1. Tim. 1. 16. *For this cause* (saith he) *was I receiued to mercie, that Iesus Christ should shew first vpon me all long suffering vnto the ensample of them which shall in time to come beleeue in him to eternall life.* Againe Philip. 3. 8. he saith, *I think all things but losse, that I might winne Christ, and might be found in him not hauing mine owne righteousnes, but that which is through the faith of Christ, that I may know him and the vertue of his resurrection*; and afterward he addeth, v. 15. *Let vs as many as be perfect be thus minded.* III. Whatsoeuer we pray for according to Gods will, we are bound to beleeue that it shall be giuen vnto vs. Mark. 11. 24. *Whatsoeuer ye desire when ye pray, beleeue that ye shall haue it, and it shall be done vnto you.* But we pray for the pardon of our owne sinnes, and for life euerlasting by Christ; and that according to the will of God. Therefore we are bound in conscience to beleeue the pardon of our owne sinnes and life euerlasting. IV. If God should speake particularly to any man, and say vnto him, Cornelius, or Peter, beleeue thou in Christ, and thou shalt be saued; this commaundement should binde him particularly. Now when the Minister lawfully called,

led, in the name and ſtead of God publiſheth the Goſpel to the congregation, that is as much as if God himſelfe had ſpoken to them particularly; calling each of them by their names and promiſing vnto them life euerlaſting in Chriſt. 2. Cor. 5. 20. *We as ambaſſadours for Chriſt, as though God didbeſeech you through vs, pray you in Chriſts ſtead, that ye be reconciled to God.*

It may be and is obiected, that if euery man be bound in conſcience to beleeue his owne Election and ſaluation by Chriſt, then ſome men are bound to beleeue that which is falſe, becauſe ſome there be euen in the middeſt of the Church, which in the counſell of God were neuer choſen to ſaluation. I anſweare, that this reaſon were good, if men were bound abſolutely to beleeue their ſaluation without further reſpect or condition: but the bond is conditionall, according to the tenour of the couenant of grace; for we are bound to beleeue in Chriſt, if we would come to life euerlaſting, or if we would be in the fauour of God, or if we would be good diſciples and members of Chriſt.

In that we are bound in conſcience on this manner to beleeue the promiſes of the Goſpell with an application of the benefites there-

thereof to our selues, sundrie necessarie and profitable points of instruction may be learned. The first, that the popish Doctours abolish a great part of the Gospel, when they teach that men are bound to beleeue the Gospel onely by a Catholicke faith, which they make to be nothing else but a gift of God, or illumination of the minde, whereby assent is giuen to the word of God that it is true; and more specially that Iesus is Christ, that is, an all-sufficient Sauiour of mankinde. All which the damned spirits beleeue: whereas the Gospel for the comfort and saluation of mens soules hath a further reach, namely to inioyne men to beleeue that the promise of saluation is not onely true in it selfe, but also true in the very person of the beleeuer, as appeares euidently by the Sacraments which are as it were a visible Gospel, in which Christ with all his benefits is offered and applied to the particular persons of men: to this ende, no doubt, that they might beleeue the accomplishment of the promise in themselues.

Secondly, we learne that it is not presumption for any man to beleeue the remission of his owne sinnes: for to doe the will of God to which we are bound, is not to presume: now it is the will of God to which he hath

bound vs in conscience, to beleeue the remission of our owne sinnes: and therefore rather not to doe it is presumptuous disobedience.

Thirdly, we are here to marke and to remember with care, the foundation of the vnfallible certentie of mans saluation. For if man be bound in conscience first to giue assent to the Gospel and secondly to applie it to himselfe by true faith, then without doubt a man by faith may be certenly perswaded of his owne Election and saluation in this life without any extraordinarie reuelation: Gods commaundements beeing in this and the like cases possible. For commaundements are either Legall or Evangelicall. Legall shew vs our disease, but giue vs no remedie: and the perfect doing of them according to the intent of the lawgiuer, by reason of mans weaknes and through mans default, is impossible in this world: As for Evangelicall commandements, they haue this priuiledge, that they may and can be performed according to the intention of the Lawgiuer in this life: because with the commandement is ioyned the inward operation of the spirit, to inable vs to effect the dutie commaunded: and the will of God is not to require absolute perfection at our hands in the Gospel as in the law: but rather to qualifie the rigour of the law by the satisfaction

tisfaction of a mediatour in our steads and of vs (we beeing in Christ) to accept the vpright will and indeauour for the deede; as the will to repent, and the will to beleeue, for repentance and true faith indeede. Now then if things required in the Gospel, be both ordinarie and possible, then for a man to haue an vnfallible certeitie of his owne saluation, is both ordinary & possible. But more of this point afterward.

Lastly, all such persons as are troubled with doubtings, distrustings, vnbeleefe, dispaire of Gods mercie, are to learne and consider that God by his word bindes them in conscience to beleeue the pardon of their owne sinnes be they neuer so grieuous or many, and to beleeue their own Election to saluation whereof they doubt. Men that are but civill haue care to auoid robbing and killing, because God giues commaundements against stealing and killing: why then should not we much more striue against our manifold doubtings and distrustings of Gods loue in Christ, hauing a commaundement of God that calls vpon vs and binds vs to doe so.

Thus we see how Gods word bindes conscience; now conscience being thus bound, againe binderes.

The bonde of conscience is called *Guiltines*. *Guiltines* is nothing els but a worke of the con-

science, binding ouer a man to a punishment before God for some sinne.

Thus much of the propet binder of the conscience: now follows the improper.

The impropet binder is that which hath no power or vertue in it selfe to binde conscience: but doth it onely by vertue of Gods word or of some part of it. It is threefold, Humane lawes, an Oath, a Promise.

§8. Of humane laws binding.

Touching humane lawes, the speciall point to be considered is, In what manner they binde. That this may in part be cleared, I will stande a while to examine and confute the opinion that the very pillers of the popish Church at this day maintaine; namely, that *Civill and Ecclesiasticall Iurisdiction haue a coactive power in the conscience, and that the lawes made thereby doe as truly and properly binde (as they speake) to mortall and venial sinne, as Gods law it selfe*. The arguments which they commonly vse, are these.

Argum. 1. Deut. 17. *That man that will doe presumptuously, and not obey the* [b] *authoritie of the priest, or Iudge, shall die: and thou shalt take away euill from Israel.* Here (say they) the precepts of the high priest are **Imperia*, not admonitions or exhortations, and they binde in conscience; otherwise the transgressours thereof should

[b] *Imperio.*

* princely commandements.

should not haue bin punished so seuerely. *Answ.* The intent of this law (as a very child may perceiue) is to establish the authoritie and right of the highest appeales for all matters of controversie in the *Synedrium* or great court at Ierusalem. Therefore the words alleadged doe not giue vnto the priest a soveraigne power of making lawes, but a power of giuing iudgement of controuersies, and that according to lawes alreadie made by God himselfe: from which iudgement there might be no appeale. Nowe this power of determining doth not constraine conscience, but the outward man to maintaine order and peace. For what reason is there that that sentence which might be either a gainsaying of Gods law, or a mistaking of it, should binde the conscience to a sinne. Againe, not every one that refused to subiect themselues to the sentence of this court, were straightway guiltie of sinne (for this did Ieremie the Prophet, and Christ our Sauiour, when they were condemned for wicked persons) but he that presumptuously despised the sentence, and by consequent the authoritie it selfe, which was the ordinance of God, was guiltie. Lastly, the seueritie of the punishment, which is temporall death, doth not argue any power in the iudge of binding conscience: this they might haue

Ier.26. 11, 15.

Lib. de vita Spirit. sect. 4. learned of their owne Doctor Gerson, who holdeth that they that binde any man to mortall sinne, must be able to punish him with answerable punishment, which is eternall death.

Argum. 2. Mat. 16. *Whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth, shall be bound in heaven.* Here to binde, is to make lawes constraining conscience according to Matth. 23. 4. *They binde heavie burdens, and lay them on mens shoulders.*

Answer. The soueraigne power of binding and loosing, is not belonging to any creature, but is proper to Christ, who hath the keyes of heaven and hell, he openeth and no man shutteth, he shutteth and no man openeth, Reu. 3. 7. As for the power of the Church it is nothing but a ministerie of seruice whereby men publish and pronounce that Christ bindeth or looseth. Againe, this binding stands not in the power of making lawes, but in remitting and retaining of mens sinnes, as the words going before declare, v. 18. *If thy brother sinne against thee, &c.* and Christ shewed his owne meaning, when he saith, *Whose sinnes ye remit they are remitted, and whose sinnes ye retaine they are retained,* Ioh. 20. 23. hauing before in the person of Peter promised them this honour, in this forme of words, Mat. 16. *I vvill giue vnto thee the keyes of the king-*

kingdome of heaven, whatsoever thou shalt binde vpon earth, shall be bound in heaven. This which I say, is approoued by consent of ancient Diuines, August. Psal. 101. ser. 2. *Remission of sinne* (saith he) *is loosing*: therefore by the law of contraries, binding is to hold sinne vnpardoned. Hilar. vpon Math. cap. 18. *Whome they binde on earth, that is* (saith he) *leaue vntied of the knots of their sinnes.* Lumberd the popish master of sentences, *The Lord*, saith he, *hath given to priests power of binding and loosing, that is, of making manifest that men are bound or loosed.* Againe both Origen, [b] Augustine, and [c] Theophilact attribute the power of binding to all Christians, and therefore they for their partes neuer dreamed that the power of binding should be an authority to make lawes. Lastly, the place Matt. 23. 4. overturnes the argument, for there the Scribes and Pharises are condemned, because they laid upon mens shoulders the burdens of their traditions as meanes of Gods worship and things binding conscience.

Lib. 4. dist. 18. cap. 4.

[b] on Mat. 18.
[c] vpon Ioh.

b Arg. 3. Act. 15. *It seemes good vnto vs & the Holy Ghost, to lay no more burden on you then these necessary things, that yee abstaine from things offered to idols, and blood, and that which is strangled, and fornication.* Here, say they, the Apostles by the instinct of the holy ghost make

a new

a new lawe not for this or that respect, but simply to binde consciences of the Gentils that they might be exercised in obedience. And this is prooued because the Apostles call this lawe a *burden*, and call the things prescribed *necessary*, and S. Luke tearmes them, the *commandements of the Apostles*: and Chrysostome calls the Epistle sent to the Church, *Imperium*, that is, a lordly charge. To this they adde, the testimonies of Tertullian, Origen, Augustine. *Answ.* Though all be granted that the law is a burden imposed, a precept of the Apostles, a charge, againe that things required therein are necessary: yet will it not follow by good consequent, that the lawe simply bindes conscience: because it was giuen with a reseruation of Christian libertie, so as out of the case of scandall, that is, if no offence were giuen to the weake Iewes, it might freely be omitted. And that will appeare by these reasons. First of all Peter saith, that it is a tempting of God, to impose upon the Gentiles the yoke of Iewish ceremonies: hee therefore must needs be contrary to himselfe if he intend to binde mens consciences to abstinence from strangled, blood, and things offered to idols. A reply is made, that this abstinence is prescribed not by the ancient law of Moses, but by a new Ecclesiasticall or Apostolicall authority. I answer

swer againe, that a Mosaicall ceremony is still the same thing though it be stablished by a new authority. And wheras Christ by his death put an end to the ceremoniall lawe, it is absurde to thinke that the Apostles by their authority revived some part of it againe, and bound mens consciences therto. Secondly the Church of god in all places suffered this cõmandement to cease, which the faithful seruants of God would neuer haue done, if they had bin perswaded that this law had bound conscience simply. It is answered, that this law ceased not because the giuing of offence unto the Iewes ceased, but because it ceased vniuersally: yea but it could not haue ceased universally, if it had bound conscience simply, specially considering it was propounded to the Church without any mention or limitation of time. Thirdly Paul was present in this counsell and knewe the intent of this lawe very well, & therefore no doubt he did not in any of his Epistles gainsay the same. This being graunted, it can not be, that this law should bind conscience out of the case of offence. For he teacheth the Corinthians that things offered to idols may be eaten so be it the weaker brother be not offended. Here it is answered that when Paul writ his first Epistle to the Corinthians, this cõmandement of the Apostles touching things strangled

1.Cor.8.9.

strangled & blood: was not come unto them. Well, to graunt all this which can not be proued, let it be answered, why Paul did not now deliuer it, & why he deliuereth a doctrine contrary to that which he had decreed at Hierusalem, which was that the Gentiles should absolutely abstaine from things offered to Idols. As for the testimonies of the fathers they are abused. Indeed Tertullian saith plainly, that christians in his daies abstained from eating of blood, and he perswades men to continue in so doing, because he is of opinion (being indeed farre deceiued) that this very law of the Apostles must last to the end of the worlde: which conceit if the Papists hold not, what meane they to build vpon him. Origen saith, that this law was very necessary in his daies: and no marrell. For by Idolithytes he understands not things that haue bene offered to idols, & are afterward brought to priuat houses or to the market as other common meates, but he understands things that remaine consecrated to idols, & are no where els vsed but in their temples, which we graunt with him must for euer be auoided as meanes and instruments of Idolatry. Wheras the law of the Apostles speaks only of the first kind. As for things strangled and blood, hee takes them to be the deuils foode: and for this cause hee approoues

Apol. cap. 9. Lib. de Pudicitia.

Contr. Cels. lib. 8.

1.

2.

abstinence

abstinence from them. And whereas Augustine saith, that it is a good thing to abstain frō things offered to idols, though he be in necessity, yet it must be understoode of the first kind of Idolithytes which are yet remaining in the idol-temples still consecrated unto them, and not of the second, of which the Apostles law (as I have said) must be understood. Epist. 154. ad Publicolam.

Arg. 4. Ioh. 21. Christ saith to Peter, [ποιμαινε] *feed my sheepe*: that is, (as the word importeth) feede and rule my sheepe. *Answ.* This feeding and ruling stands not in making new lawes, but in teaching and gouerning the Church of God according to the doctrine which they had receiued from Christ. And this action of feeding is ascribed to all Christians: Revelat. 3. 27. who can not therupon chalenge a power of making lawes to the conscience.

Argum. 5. Ioh. 20. *As my father sent me, so I send you*: but Christ was sent of his father not only with power of preaching and ministring the sacraments, but also with authority of commanding and giuing iudgement. *Answ.* If this kind of reasoning may stand, all the Apostles shall be made redeemers; for they were all sent as Christ was: and hee was sent not onely to preach the redemption of mankind, but also to effect and worke the same. If this be absurde,

then

then it is a flat abusing of scripture to gather frō this saying of Christ, that the Apostles had power of binding conscience because he had so. It is true indeed that there is a similitude or analogie betwene the calling of Christ and his Apostles: but it wholly stands in these points. Christ was ordained to his office before all worldes, & so were the Apostles: Christ was called of his father immediatly, and so were they of Christ: Christ was sent to the whol worlde, & so were they: Christ receiued all power in heaven and earth as beeing necessary for a mediatour: and they receiued an extraordinary authority from him with such a plentifull measure of the spirit as was necessary for the Apostolicall function. Lastly Christ was sent euen as he was man to be a teacher of the Iewes: & therefore he is called the minister of circumcision, Rom. 15.8. & so the Apostles are sent by him to teach the Gentiles. Thus far is the comparison to be enlarged, & no further. And that no man might imagine that some parte of this resemblance stands in a power of binding conscience, Christ hath put a speciall exception when he saith, Goe teach all nations, teaching them to obserue al things *that I haue commanded you.*

Arg. 6. Rom. 13. *Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God*: and, *they that resist*

sist shall receiue to themselues iudgement: and, *ye must be subiect not onely for wrath, but also for conscience sake. Answ.* Magistracie indeed is an ordinance of God to which we owe subiectiō, but how farre subiection is due there is the questiō: For body & goods & outward cōversation I grant all: but a subiection of cōscience to mans lawes, I deny. And betweene these two there is a great difference: to be subiect to authority *in conscience*, & to be subiect to it *for conscience*; as wil be manifest if we do but consider the phrase of the Apostle, the meaning whereof is, that we must performe obedience not onely for anger, that is, for the auoiding of punishment, but also for the auoiding of sinne, & so by cōsequent for auoiding a breach in cōsciēce. Now this breach is not properly made because mans law is neglected, but because Gods law is broken which ordaineth magistracie, & withall binds mens consciences to obey their lawfull commandements. And the dānation that is due unto men for resisting the ordinance of God comes not by the single breach of magistrates commandement, but by a transgression of the law of God which appointeth magistrates & their authority. To this answer papists reply nothing that is of moment. Therfore I proceed.

Arg. 7. 1. Cor. 4. *What will you that I come unto*

you

you with a rod, or in the spirit of meeknes? Now this rod is a iudicial power of punishing sinners. *Answ.* For the regiment & protection of Gods Church. There be 2. rods mentioned in scripture: the rod of Christ, & the Apostolicall rodd. The rod of Christ is termed a rod of iron or the rod of his mouth, & it signifies that absolute & soueraigne power which Christ hath ouer his creatures wherby he is able to conuert & saue them, or to forsake and destroy them. And it is a peculiar priuiledge of this rodde to smite and wound the conscience. The Apostolicall rodde was a certaine extraordinary power whereby God inabled them to plague and punish rebellious offenders with grieuous iudgements not in their soules but in their bodies alone. With this rod Paul smote Elimas blind, & Peter smote Ananias and Saphira with bodily death. And it may be that Paul by this power did giue up the incestuous man when he was excommunicate, to be vexed in his body and tormented by the deuill: but that by this rodde the Apostles could smite conscience, it can not be prooued.

Arg. 8. 1. Tim. 3. Paul made a law that none hauing two wiues should be ordained a Bishop: now this law is positiue and Ecclesiasticall and bindes conscience. *Answ.* Paul is not the maker of this law, but God himselfe, who ordained that

that in mariage not three but two alone should be one flesh: and that they which serue at the altar of the Lord, should be holy. And to graunt that this law were a new law beside the written word of God, yet doeth it not follow that Paul was the maker of it: because he used not to deliuer any doctrine to the Churches but that which he receiued of the Lord.

Argum. 9. Luc. 10. *He which heareth you, heareth me. Answ.* These wordes properly concerne the Apostles, and doe not in like maner belong to pastors & teachers of the Church. And the end of these wordes is not to confirme any Apostolicall authority in making lawes to the conscience; but to signifie the priviledge which hee had vouchsafed them aboue all others, that he would so farre forth assist them with his spirite, that they should not erre or be deceiued in teaching & publishing the doctrine of saluation, though otherwise they were sinfull men: according to Matth. 10. *It is not you that speake, but the spirite of my father which speaketh in you.* And the promise to be led into all truth was directed vnto them.

Arg. 10. 1. Cor. 11. *I praise you that yee keepe my commandements. Answ.* Paul deliuered nothing of his owne concerning the substance of the doctrine of saluation & the worship of God,

but that which he receiued from Christ; the precepts here ment are nothing else but rules of decencie & comely order in the congregation: and though they were to be obeyed, yet Pauls meaning was not to binde any mans conscience therewith. For of greater matters he saith, *This I speake for your commoditie, and not to intangle you in a snare*, 1. Cor. 7. 35.

Arg. 11. Councels of ancient fathers when they commād or forbid any thing, do it with threatning of a curse to the offenders. *Ans.* The church in former time used to annexe vnto hir Canons the curse *anathema*, because things decreed by them were indeed, or at the least thought to be the will and word of God: and they had respect to the saying of Paul, If any teach otherwise though he be an angell from heauen, let him be accursed. Therfore councels in this action were no more but instruments of God to accurse those, whome he first of all had accursed.

Arg. 12. An act indifferent if it be commanded is made necessary: & the keeping of it is the practise of vertue, therefore euery law bindes conscience to a sinne. *Ans.* An act in it selfe indifferent being commāded by mans law is not made simply necessary, for that is as much as gods law doth or can doe, but only in some part, that is, so far forth as the said act or action tends to maintaine

taine and preserue the good end for which the law is made. And though the action be in this regard necessary, yet doth it still remaine indifferent as it is considered in it selfe out of the ende of the law: so as if peace, the common good & comely order may be maintained & all offence auoided by any other meanes, the act may be done or not done without sinne before God. For whereas God himselfe hath giuen liberty & freedome in the use of things indifferent, the law of man doeth not take away the same but onely moderate and order it for the common good.

Arg. 13. The fast of Lent stands by a lawe and commandement of men: and this lawe bindes conscience simply: for the ancient fathers haue called it a Tradition Apostolicall, and make the keeping of it to be necessary, and the not keeping of it a sinne, and punish the offenders with excommunication. *Answer.* It is plaine to him that will not be obstinate, that Lent fast was not commaunded in the Primitiue Church, but was freely kept at mens pleasures, & in seuerall Churches diuersly both in regard of space of time, as also in respect of diversity of meats. Ireneus in his epistle to Victor cited by Eusebius saith, *Some haue thought that they must fast one day, some two daies, some more, some* 40. *houres* Euseb. l. 5. 26.

Sozom. lib. 7. cap. 19. *day and night, which diversitie of fasting commendeth the vnitie of faith.* Spiridion a good man did eate flesh in Lent, and caused his guest to doe the same, and this he did upon iudgemẽt because he was perswaded out of Gods worde, that to the clean all things were cleane. And Eusebius recordes that Montanus the heretike was the first that prescribed solemne and set lawes of fasting. And whereas this fast is called an Apostolicall tradition it is no great matter, for it was the manner of the ancient Church in former times to tearme rites and orders Ecclesiastieall not set downe in scriptures Apostolicall orders, that by this meanes they might commend them to the people: as Ierome testifieth, *every province* (saith he) *may thinke the constitutions of the ancestours to be Apostolicall lawes.* And whereas it is said to be a sinne not to fast in Lent (as Augustine speaketh) it is not by reason of any commandement binding conscience, for Augustine saith plainly, that neither Christ nor his Apostles appointed any set time of fasting: & Chrysostome, that Christ neuer commanded vs to follow his fast: but the true reason hereof is borrowed from the ende. For the Primitiue Church vsed not the popish fast, which is to eat whitmeate alone, but an abstinence from all meates vsed specially to mortifie the flesh and

Euseb. lib. 5. cap. 18.

Hieron. epist. 118. ad Luc.

Ser. de Tem. 62.

Epist. 86.

Chrysost. on Mat. hom. 47.

to

to prepare men before-hand to a worthy receiving of the Eucharist. And in regarde of this good ende was the offence. And whereas it is said, that auncient fathers taught a necessitie of keeping this fast, euen Hierome whome they alledge to this purpose saith the contrary. For confuting the errour of Montanus who had his set times of fast to be kept of necessity, hee saith, *we fast in Lent according to the Apostles tradition as in a time meete for vs: and wee doe it not as though it were not lawfull for vs to fast in the rest of the yeere except Penticost: but it is one thing to doe a thing of necessitie, and anothing to offer a gift of free-vvill.* Lastly, excommunication was for the open contempt of this order taken vp in the Church, which was, that men should fast before Easter for their further humiliation & preparation to the sacrament. So the 29. canō of the councill of Gangres must be understood. As for the Canons of the Apostles (so falsely called) and the 8. councill of Toledo, I much respect not what they say in this case.

Hierom. ad Marcel. de error. Mont.

Cangre

Arg. 14. Gods authority binds conscience: magistrates authority is Gods authority: therefore magistrates authority binds conscience properly. *Ans.* Gods authority may be takē two waies: first for that soueraigne and absolute power which he useth ouer all his creatures: secondly,

for that finite & limited power which he hath ordained that men shall exercise ouer men. If the *minor*, namely that Magistrates authority is Gods authority, be taken in the first sense, it is false: for the soueraigne power of god is incommunicable. If it be taken in the second sense, the *proposition* is false. For there be sundry authorities ordained of God, as the authority of the father ouer the childe, of the master ouer the seruant, the authority of the master ouer his scholler, which doe not properly and simply bind in conscience as the authority of gods lawes doth.

By these arguments which I haue now answered, & by many other being but lightly skanned, it will appeare that necessary obedience is to be performed both to ciuil & ecclesiasticall iurisdiction: but that they haue a constraining power to bind conscience as properly as gods laws do, it is not yet prooued, neither can it be: as I will make manifest by other arguments.

Arg. 1. He that makes a law binding conscience to mortal sinne, hath power, if not to saue yet to destroy: because by sin, which follows upon the transgressiō of his law, comes death & damnation: But God is the only lawgiuer that hath this priuiledge, which is, after he hath giuē his law, vpō the breaking or keeping thereof, to saue or destroy. Iam. 4. 12. *There is one lawgiuer that can saue or destroy.* Therfore God alone makes laws

binding cõscience properly, & no creature cãdo the like. Answer is made that S. Iames speaks of the principall law-giuer, that by his own proper authority makes lawes, & doth in such manner saue & destroy, that he need not feare to be destroied of any: & that he speaks not of secondary lawgiuers that are deputies of god & make laws in his name. I say again that this answer stãds not with the text. For S. Iames speakes simply without distinctiõ, limitatiõ, or exceptiõ: & the effect of his reason is this. No mã at all must slander his brother, because no man must be iudge of the law: & no man can be iudge of the law, because no man can be a law-giuer to saue and destroy. Now then where be those persons that shall make lawes to the soules of men, & binde them unto punishment of mortall sinne; considering God alone is the sauing & destroying lawgiuer.

Arg. 2. He that can make laws as truly binding conscience as gods lawes, can also prescribe rules of Gods worship: because to bind the conscięce is nothing els but to cause it to excuse for things that are well done, and therefore truely please God: & to accuse for sinne wherby god is dishonoured: but no man can prescribe rules of gods worship; & humane lawes as they are humane laws, appoint not the seruice of God. Esai. 29.13. *Their fear towards me was taught by the precepts of mẽ.* Mat. 15. 9 *they worship me in vain teaching*

doctrines which are the commandements of men. Papists here make answer, that by lawes of men we must understand such lawes as be unlawfull or unprofitable being made without the authority of God or instinct of his spirit. It is true indeed that these commandements of men were unlawfull: but the cause must be considered: they were unlawfull not because they commanded that which was unlawful & against the will of God, but because things in themselues lawfull were commanded as parts of gods worship. To wash the outward part of the cup or platter, & to wash hands before meat; are things in respect of civill use very lawfull, & yet are these blamed by Christ & no other reason cā be rendred but this, that they were prescribed not as things indifferent or civill, but as matters pertaining to Gods worship. It is not against Gods worde in some politike regards to make distinctions of meats, & drinks, & times: yet Paul calls these things *doctrines of deuils*, because they were commāded as things wherein God would be worshipped.

Matt.23.15.

Arg.3. God hath giuen a liberty to the conscience whereby it is freed frō all lawes of his own whatsoeuer, excepting such lawes & doctrines as are necessary to salvation. Col. 2.10. *If yee be dead with Christ, ye are free frō the elemēts of the world.* Gal.5.1. *Stand ye in the liberty wherewith Christ*

Christ hath freed you, and be not againe intangled with the yoke of bondage. Nowe, if humane lawes made after the graunt of this libertie, bind conscience properly, then must they either take away the foresaid libertie, or diminish the same; but that they cannot doe: for that which is grãted by an higher authority, namely God himself, cannot be reuoked or repealed by the inferiour authoritie of any man. It is answered, that this freedome is onely from the bondage of sinne, from the curse of the morall law, from the ceremoniall and iudiciall lawes of Moses, and not from the lawes of our superiours. And I answer againe, that it is absurd to thinke that God giues vs libertie in conscience from any of his owne laws, and yet will haue our consciences stil to remaine in subiection to the laws of sinnefull men.

Arg. 4. Whosoeuer bindes conscience, commaunds conscience. For the bonde is made by a commãdement vrging conscience to do his dutie, which is to accuse or excuse for euill or well doing. Now Gods laws command conscience in as much as they are spirituall, commaunding bodie and spirit, with all the thoughts, will, affections, desires, and faculties, and requiring obedience of them all according to their kinde. As for the lawes of men, they want power to commaund conscience. Indeede if it were possible

for

for our gouernours by law to commaund mens thoughts and affections, then also might they command cõscience: but the first is not posible; for their lawes can reach no further then to the outward man, that is, to bodie and goods, with the speaches and deedes thereof: and the ende of them all is not to maintaine spirituall peace of conscience, which is betweene man and God, but onely that externall and ciuill peace which is betweene man and man. And it were not meete that men should commaund conscience, which cannot see conscience and iudge of all her actions, which appeare not outwardly and whereof there be no witnesses, but God and the conscience of the doer. Lastly, men are no fitte commanders of conscience, because they are no lords of it, but God himselfe alone.

Argum. 5. Men in making lawes are subiect to ignorance and errour; and therefore when they haue made a law (as neare as posible they can) agreeable to the equitie of Gods law, yet can they not assure themselues and others that they haue failed in no point or circumstance. Therefore it is against reason that humane lawes beeing subiect to defects, faults, errours, and manifold imperfections, should truly bind conscience, as Gods lawes doe which are the rule of righteousnes. All gouernours in the world,

vpon

vpon their daily experience see and acknowledge this to be true which I say, (by reason that to their olde lawes, they are constrained to put restrictions, amplications, modifications of all kindes, with new readings and interpretations) saving the Bishop of Rome (so falsly tearmed) which perswades himselfe to haue when he is in his consistorie, such an infallible assistance of the spirite that he can not possibly erre in iudgement.

Argum. 6. If mens lawes by inward vertue binde conscience properly as Gods lawes, then our dutie is to learne, studie, and remember them as well as Gods laws, yea ministers must be diligent to preach them, as they are diligent in preaching the doctrine of the Gospell: because euery one of them bindes to mortall sinne, as the Papists teach. But that they should be taught and learned as Gods lawes, it is most absurd in the iudgement of all men, Papists themselues not excepted.

Argum. 7. Inferiour authoritie can not binde the superiour: nowe the courts of men and their authoritie are vnder conscience. For God in the heart of euery man hath erected a tribunall seate, and in his head he hath placed neither saint nor angell, nor any other creature what soeuer but conscience it selfe,

who

who therefore is the highest iudge that is or can be vnder God; by whose direction also courts are kept and lawes are made.

Thus much of the popish opinion: by which it appeares that one of the principall notes of Antichrist, agrees fitly to the Pope of Rome. Paul, 2. Thess. 2. makes it a speciall propertie of Antichrist to exalt himselfe against, or aboue all that is called God, or worshipped. Now what doth the Pope els, when he takes vpon him authoritie to make such lawes as shall binde the conscience, as properly and truly as Gods lawes? and what doth he els, when he ascribes to himselfe power to free mens consciences from the bond of such lawes of God, as are vnchaungeable: as may appeare in a canon of the council of Trent: the words are these, *If any shall say, that those degrees of consanguinitie which be expressed in Leviticus, doe onely hinder matrimonie to be made, and breake it beeing made, and that the Church cannot dispense with some of them, or appoint that more degrees may hinder or breake marriage, let him be accursed.* O sacrilegious impietie! considering the lawes of affinitie and consanguinitie, Lev. 18. are not ceremoniall, or iudiciall lawes peculiar to the Iewes, but the very laws of nature. What is this canon els, but a publike proclamation to the world, that the

Sess. 24. can. 3.

Pope

Pope and Church of Rome doe sit as lords, or rather idols in the hearts & consciences of men. This will yet more fully appeare to any man, if we read popish bookes of *practical* or *Case-divinitie*, in which the common manner is, to binde conscience where God looseth it, and to loose where he bindes; but a declaration of this, requires long time.

Now I come (as neare as possibly I can) to set downe the true manner, how mens lawes are by Diuines and may be said to binde conscience. That this may be cleared, two things must be handled, By what meanes they binde, and How farre forth.

Touching the meanes, I set downe this rule. *wholesome lawes of men, made of things indifferent, binde conscience by vertue of the generall commaundement of God, vvhich ordaineth the Magistrates authoritie: so as vvhosoever shall wittingly & willingly, with a disloyal mind, either breake or omit such lavves, is guiltie of sinne before God.*

By *wholesome lawes*, I vnderstand such positiue constitutions, as are not against the law of God, and withall tend to maintaine the peaceable estate and common good of men.

Furthermore I adde this clause, *made of things indifferent*, to note the peculiar matter whereof

of humane lawes properly intreat, namely such things as are neither expressly commanded or forbidden by God.

Now such kinde of lawes haue no vertue or power in themselues to constraine conscience, but they bind onely by vertue of an higher commandement. *Let every soule be subiect to the higher powers*, Rom.13.1.or, *Honour father and mother*, Exod. 20. which commaundements binde vs in conscience to performe obedience to the good lawes of men. As S. Peter saith, *Submit your selues to every humane ordinance for the Lord*, 1. Pet.2.13.that is, *for conscience of God*, as he saith afterward, v.19. wherby he signifieth two things: first that God hath ordained the authority of gouernours: secondly that he hath appointed in his word, and thereby bound men in conscience to obay their gouernours lawfull commandements.

If the case fall out otherwise, as commonly it doth, that humane laws be not inacted of things indifferent, but of things that be good in themselues, that is, commanded by God, then are they not *humane* properly but *diuine* lawes. Mens lawes intreating of things that are *morally good*, and the parts of *Gods vworshippe*, are the same with Gods laws: and therfore binde conscience, not because they were inacted by men, but because

cause they were first made by God: men being no more but instruments and ministers in his name to revive, renew, and to put in execution such precepts and laws as prescribe the worship of God, standing in the practise of true religion & vertue. Of this kind are all positiue lawes touching articles of faith, & the duties of the morall law. And the man that breakes such lawes sinnes two waies, first because he breaks that which is in conscience a law of God, secondly because in disobaying his lawfull magistrate, he disobaies the generall commandement of God touching magistracie.

But if it shall fall out that mens lawes be made of things that are euill and forbidden by God, then is there no bonde of conscience at all, but contrariwise, men are bound in conscience not to obay, Act. 4. 19. And hereupon the three children are commended for not obaying Nabuchadnezzar, when he gaue a particular commandement vnto them to fall downe and worship the golden image, Dan. 3.

Moreouer, in that mans law binds onely by power of Gods law, hence it follows, that Gods law alone hath this priuiledge, that the breach of it should be a sinne. S. Iohn saith 1. epist. 3. *Sinne is the anomie, or, transgressiō of the law*, vnderstanding Gods lawe. When Dauid by adul-

adulterie and murder had offended many men, & that many waies, he saith Psal.51. *against thee, against thee haue I sinned.* And Augustine defined sinne to be some thing said, done, or desired against the law of God. Some man may say, if this be so, belike then we may breake mens laws without sinne. I answer, that men in breaking humane lawes, both may and doe sinne; but yet not simply, because they breake them, but because in breaking them, they doe also breake the law of God. The breach of a law must be considered two waies. First as it is a trespasse, hinderance, iniurie, damage, and in this respect it is committed against mens lawes: secondly the breach of a law must be considered as it is sinne, and so it is onely against Gods law.

The second point, namely How farreforth mens lawes binde conscience, I explane on this manner. It is all that the lawes of God doe or can doe, to binde conscience simply and absolutely. Therefore humane laws bind not simply, but so farre forth as they are agreeable to Gods word, serue for the cõmon good, stãd with good order, and hinder not the libertie of conscience. The necessitie of the law ariseth of the necessitie of the good end thereof. And as the end is good and profitable more or lesse, so is the law it selfe necessarie more or lesse.

Hence

Hence it followeth that a man may doe any thing *beside humane lawes* and constitutions without breach of conscience. For if he shall omit the doing of any law I. without hindrance of the ende and particular considerations, for which the law was made: II. without offence giuing as much as in him lieth: III. without contempt of him that made the law, he is not to be accused of sinne. Example. In time of warre, the magistrate of a citie commands that no man shall open the gates: the end is, that the citie and euery member thereof may be in safetie. Now it falls out that certaine citizens being vpon occasion without the citie, are pursued by the enemie and in daunger of their lifes. Herupon some man within openeth the gate to reskue them. The question is, whether he haue sinned or no. And the truth is, he hath not: because he did not hinder the ende of the law, but rather further it, and that without scandal to men, or contempt to the magistrate.

And this stands euen by the equitie of Gods word. God made a law, that the priests onely should eate of the shewbread: now Dauid being no priest, did vpon vrgent occasion eate of it without sinne. If this be true in Gods law, then it may also be true in the lawes of men, that they may in some cases be omitted without

sinne against God.

Neither must this seeme strange. For as there is a keeping of a law, and a breaking of the same: so there is a middle or meane action betweene them both, which is, to doe a thing * besides the law, and that without sinne.

* Facere aliquid præter legem, nõ contra eam.

To proceede further, mens lawes be either civill or ecclesiastical. Civill lawes are for their substance determinations of necessarie and profitable circumstances, tending to vphold and maintaine the commandements of the second table. More specially they prescribe what is to be don and what is to be left vndone, touching actions both civill & criminal, touching offices and bargines of all sorts &c. yea they conclude, inioyne, & commãd not onely such affaires as be of smaller importãce, but also things & actions of great waight, tending to maintaine common peace, civill societie, and the very state of the common wealth. Now such laws binde so farre forth, that though they be omitted without any apparant scandal or contempt, yet the breach of them is a sinne against God. Take this example: A subiect in this lande vpon pouertie, or vpon a couetous minde, against the good law of the land, coines money, which afterward by a sleight of his wit, is cunningly conuaied abroad into the hands of men, and is not espied. Here is no euident offence

fence giuen to any man, nor open contempt shewed to the lawgiuer: and yet in this action he hath sinned, in that closely otherwise then he ought to haue done, he hath hindered the good of the common wealth, and robbed the soueraigne prince of her right.

Ecclesiasticall lawes, are certaine necessarie and profitable determinations of circumstances of the commaundements of the first table. I say here *circumstances*, because all doctrines pertaining to the foundation and good estate of the Church, as also the whole worshippe of God, are set downe and commaunded in the written word of God, and can not be prescribed and concluded otherwise by all the Churches in the world. As for the Creedes and Confessions of particular Churches, they are in substance Gods word, and they binde not in conscience by any power the Church hath, but because they are the word of God.

The lawes then which the Church in proper speach is saide to make, are decrees concerning outward order and comelines in the administration of the word and sacramẽts, in the meetings of the cõgregation, &c. & such laws made according to the generall rules of Gods word, (which requires that all things be don to edificatiõ, in comelines, for the auoiding of offence) are

cessarie to be obserued, and the word of God binds all men to the so farre forth as the keeping of them maintains decent order, and preuents open offence. Yet if a law concerning some external rite or thing indifferent, be at some time vpon some occasion omitted, no offence giuen, not contempt shewed to Ecclesiasticall authoritie, there is no breach made in the conscience? and that appeares by the example before handled. The Apostles guided by the holy Ghost, made a decree for the auoiding of offence, necessarie to be obserued, namely that the Gentiles should abstaine from strangled and blood and idolothytes: and yet Paul out of the case of scandall and contempt, permits the Corinthians to doe otherwise, 1. Cor. 8. & 9. which he would not haue done, if to doe otherwise out of the case of scandall and contempt had bin sinne.

Againe, lawes are either mixt or meerely penall. Mixt, are such lawes as are of weightie matters, and are propounded in cõmauding or forbidding termes: and they binde men first of all to obedience, for the necessary good of humane societies: and secondly to a punishment, if they obay not, that a supplie may be made of the hindrance of the common good. In the breach of this kind of laws, though a man be neuer so willing to suffer the punishment, yet that will not

discharge

discharge his conscience before God when he offends. If a man coin mony with this minde to be willing to die when he is conuicted, yet that will not free him from a sinne in the action, because Gods law binds vs not onely to subiection in bearing of punishments, but also to obedience of his bare commandement, it beeing lawfull, though he should set downe no punishment.

A law *meerely penall* is that, which beeing made of matters of lesse importance, and not vttered precisely in commaunding tearmes, doeth onely declare and shewe what is to be done, or conditionally require this or that with respect to the punishment, on this manner. If any person doe this or that, then he shall forfeit thus or thus. This kind of law binds especially to the punishment, & that in the very intent of the lawgiuer, and he that is readie in omitting the law to pay the fine or punishmẽt, is not to be charged with sinne before God: the penaltie being answerable to the losse that comes by the neglect of the law.

Thus we see how farre forth mens lawes bind conscience. The vse of this point is this: I. hence wee learne that the immunitie of the Popish cleargie whereby they take themselues exempted from civill courts and from civill authoritie in criminall causes, hath no warrant: because Gods commandements binds euery man whatsoeuer

soeuer to be subiect to the magistrate, Rom.13.1. *Let euery soule be subiect to the higher powers.* II. Hence we see also, what notorious rebells those are, that being borne subiects of this land, yet choose rather to die then to acknowledge (as they are bound in conscience) the Queenes Maiestie to be supreame gouernour vnder God in all causes & ouer all persons. III. Lastly we are taught hereby to be readie and willing to giue subiection, obedience, reuerence, and all other duties to magistrates, whether they be superiour or inferiour: yea with cheaefulnes to pay taxes and subsidies, and all such lawfull charges as are appointed by them. *Giue to Cesar that which is Cesars, & to God that which is Gods.* Rom.13.7. *Giue to all men their dutie: tribute to vnto tribute: custome to whome custome.*

§ 9. Of an Oath binding.

Now follows the Oath, which is either assertorie or promissorie. Assertorie, by which a man auoucheth that a thing was done or not done. *Promissorie*, by which a man promiseth to doe a thing or not to doe it. Of both these I mean to speak, but specially of the second. And here two points must be cõsidered, the first by what means an oath bindeth, the second when it bindeth.

An oath bindeth by vertue of such particular cõmandements, as require the keeping of oathes lawfully taken. Num.30.3. *Whosoeuer sweareth an oath to binde his soule by a bond, he shall not*

breake his word, but shall doe according to all that proceed out of his mouth.

This being so, a question may be made, whether the oathes of infidels bind conscience, & by what vertue, cõsidering they neither know the Scriptures nor the true God. *Ans.* They* doe bind in conscience. For example: Iacob & Laban make a couenant confirmed by oath. Iacob sweares by the true God, Laban by the god of Nachor, that is, by his idols. Now Iacob, though he approoue not the forme of this oath, yet he accepts it for a civil bond of the couenant: & no doubt, though Laban beleeued not Gods word reuealed to the Patriarks, yet he was bound in cõscience to keep this oth euen by the law of nature, & though he knew not the true God, yet he reputed the false god of Nachor to be the true God. Gen. 31. 53.

* Thus saith *August. epist. 154. ad Publicolam. & Lumberd. sent. lib. 3. dist. 39.*

Againe, if a lawfull oath by vertue of Gods cõmandements bind conscience, then it must needs be that the Romane Church hath long erred, in that shee teacheth and maintaineth that gouernours, as namely the Pope and other inferiour Bishops, haue power to giue relaxations and dispensations, not onely for oathes vnlawfull (from which the word of God doth sufficiently free vs, though they should neuer giue absolutiõ) but from a true & lawfull oath made wittingly & willingly without errour or deceit of a thing, honest and possible: as when the Pope frees the

Thom. 2. 2. q. 89.

subiects of this land, as occasion is offered, from their sworne allegiance and loyaltie to which they are bound; not onely by the law of nature, but also by a solemne and particular oath to the Supremacie, which none euer deemed vnlawfull but such as carrie traytors hearts. Now this erronious diuinitie would easily be reuoked, if men did but consider the nature of an oath, one part whereof is Inuocation; in which we pray vnto God, first that he would become a witnes vnto vs that we speak the truth and purpose not to deceiue: secondly if we faile & breake our promise, that he would take reuenge vpon vs: and in both these peritions we bind our selues immediatly to God himselfe, and God againe who is the ordainer of the oath, accepts this bond and ioins it by his commandement, till it be accomplished. Hence it follows, that no creature cā haue power to vntie the bond of an oath that is truly and lawfully an oath, vnlés we will make the creature aboue God himselfe. And our Saiour Christ gaue better counsell when he commanded vs to *performe our oathes to the Lord* for the preuenting of periurie, Math. 5. 33.

Next let vs consider the time when an oath bindeth or bindeth not.

An oth bindeth thē, when it is made of things certen & possible, in truth, iustice, iudgemēt, for the

the glory of God & the good of our neighbour.

Question. I. Whether doeth an oath binde conscience if by the keeping of it there followe losses and hinderances? *Answ.* If it be of a thing that is lawfull, and the domages be priuate to him that sweareth, then doth it bind conscience. For example: A man makes a purchase of lande at the sea side: his bargaine is confirmed only by oath: and it falles out that before he doe enter possession, the sea breakes in and drownes a part of that purchase. Now he is in conscience to stand to his bargaine, because the thing is lawfull, & the domage is priuate, & great reuerence must be had of the name of God which hath bin used in the bargaine making. Dauid makes it the property of a good man, *to sweare to his owne hinderance and not to change*, Psal. 15. v. 4.

Question. II. Whether the oath which a man hath taken, being induced thereto by fraud and guile, doeth bind conscience. *Answ.* If it be still of a thing lawfull, and bring nothing but priuate losses, it is to be kept. When the Gibeonites had by a fraud brought Iosua to make a league with them, and to binde it with an oath, hee and the princes of the people answer them thus, *Wee have sworne vnto them by the Lorde God of Israel, now therefore wee may not touch them.* Ios. 9. 19. And 300. yeres after, when

Saul

Saul slewe certaine of the Gibeonites against this othe, the plagues of famine was upon the people of Israel three yeeres, and was not staied till certaine persons of Sauls family for a recompence were put to death, 2. Sam. 21. v. 7.

Question III. Whether an oath made by feare or compulsion bind in conscience. For example: A thiefe disappointed of the booty which he looked for, bindes the true man by solemne oath upon paine of present death to fetch and deliuer vnto him some portion of mony as one 100 or 200 crownes for the redeeming of his life. Well, the oath is taken, and the question is, whether it bind him or not to perform his promise. An answer may be this: some [b] protestant diuines thinke it doth bind: some againe thinke no: but I take it the safest course to holde the meane betweene both, on this manner. The oth seemes to bind, and is to be performed: neither is it against the good of the cõmon-wealth (for then it were unlawfull) but it is rather a furtherance in that a member therof is preserued: and the losses which follow are only priuate to the man, rather to be endured then the losse of life. Yet that a remedy may be had of this priuate iniury, & that a publike mischiefe may be preuented, the party is to reueale the matter to the magistrate, whose office it is to punish robbers and to order all things according to equity for the

[b] *P. Martyr. class. 2. loc. 13. n. 21. Melanchth. in Eth. quæst. de iureiur.*

[c] *Calvin upõ Psal. 15.*

cõmon good. But if the case fall out, that the mã through exceeding feare doe further sweare to keep silence, I see not how his oth may be kept, except he be sure that nothing will ensue therof, but a priuate damage to himself. For otherwise perpetuall silence seemes to be a secrete consenting to the robber, & an occasion that others fall into the like danger and hazard of their liues.

Againe, in six cases an oth binds not conscience at all. I. If it be made of a thing that is flat against the word of God. For all the power of binding which it hath is by the word of god: & therfore whẽ it is against Gods will, it hath no power to constraine. And it is an old receiued rule, that an oth must not be a bonde of iniquity. Hereupon Dauid when he had made a rash oth to kill Nabal & all his houshold, reioyced when he had an occasion offered by Abigail to break the same, 1. Sam. 25. 32. And though he sware to Shemi, that he would saue his life, 2. Sam. 19. 23. yet afterward upon better consideration (as it may seem) he commanded his son Salomon to put him to death, as one that had long agoe deserued the same. 1. King. 2. 9. And Herod was far deceiued, that thought he was bound by his oth to giue to the dãsell Iohn Baptists head in a platter. Mat. 14. 7. II. If it be against the good and wholesome lawes of any kingdome or countrey, whereof a man is a member it bindes not at all:

because on the contrary Gods commandement bindes vs to keepe the good lawes of men. III. If it be made by such persons as want sufficient reason and discretion, as young children, fooles, madde men. For the conscience can not indeed be bounde, where the understanding can not discerne what is done. IIII. If it be made of such as haue no power to bind themselues, it bindes not: because it is made against the lawe of nature, which is, that * he which is not in his owne power can not binde himselfe. Hence it followes, that papists erre grossely when they teach, that a childe a may enter into any rule or order of religion, yea binde himselfe thereto by oath, and the oath to be good, flatt against his parents consent. Num. 30. 4. *If a woman vow vnto the Lord, & bind her selfe by a bond, being in her fathers house in the time of her youth, &c. 6. If her father disallow her the same day that he heareth all her vowes and bondes, they shall not be of value.* And an ancient councill decreed that *all children that vpon pretence of Gods worship should depart from their parents, and not doe them due reverence, should be accursed.* Secondly they erre in that they teach that the promise made priuately by a childe in way of marriage without and against consent of wife and careful parents, bindes them: whereas indeede if this promise

* *Qui sui iuris non est obligare se non potest.*

a *Bellarm. li. 2. de Monac. cap. 36.*

Concil. Gang. cap. 16.

promise were further bound by an oth, it could not stand: because children under gouernment and tuition of parents can not giue themselues. V. It bindes not if it be made of a thing that is out of a mans power, as if a man sweare to his friend to giue him another mans goods. VI. If at the first it were lawfull, and afterwarde by some meanes become either impossible or vnlawfull, it binds not conscience. For when it becomes impossible, then wee may safely thinke that God from heauen frees a man from his oath. And when it beginnes to be unlawfull, then it ceaseth to bind, because the binding vertue is onely from the worde of God. For example: a king bindes himselfe by oath to a forraine Christian prince to find him men & money to defende his people against all enemies. This oath is lawfull. Well, afterward the prince becomes a professed enemy to him, his religion, & people: and then the kings oth becomes unlawful and binds him not: because the word forbids that there should be any league of amitie with Gods enemies: though there may be leagues of concord with them.

Seeing a lawfull oath must bind conscience, though a man be deceiued and great losses follow, it shews in how great reuerence we should haue Gods name, and with what care and consideration

sideration take an oth. And by this we must be aduertised to take heed of customable swearing in our common talke, whether our oathes be great or small. We must thinke of an oth as a part of Gods worship: nay the H. ghost often puts it for the whole worship of God. Isai. 19. 18. *In that day shall five cities in the lande of Egypt speake the language of Canaan, and shall sweare by the Lorde of hostes*, that is, acknowledge and worship him. Ierem. 12. 16. *If they will learne the waies of my people, to sweare by my Name, The Lorde liveth, then shall they be built in the midlest of my people.* This serues to shew unto us, that such as giue them-selues to swearing, want religion & good conscience: & that those families in which there is rifenesse of othes, abandon all care of religion, and banish God out of their houses. And indeed it is a very hard thing for the common swearer to auoide common periury. If we see a man holde up his hand at the barre of an earthly iudge we pity him and are sorry for him: oh then why doe we not pittie blasphemers and common swearers. For with God they are no better, then rebels, that hold up their hands at the barre of his iudgement seate as guilty malefactours. Exod. 20. 7. Augustine saith well, *They that worship stockes and stones feare to sweare falsely by stones,*

ſtones, and doeſt not thou feare God that is preſent, God that liveth, God that knowveth, God that taketh revenge of contemners? but of bad cuſtome vvhen thou art beleeved, thou ſvveareſt: vvhen none requires it, thou ſvveareſt: and vvhen men can not abide it, thou ſvveareſt.

Thus much of an Oath: now ſollowes a promiſe which is either to God or man: the firſt is called a vow, the ſecond a ſingle promiſe.

§ 10. Of a vow binding.

A vowe is taken three waies. Firſt generally for a promiſe of morall obedience: and this vowe is firſt made in Baptiſme and continued in the Lordes Supper, as alſo in the ſpirituall exerciſes of invocation and repentance. It is called of Peter 1. Epiſt. 3. 21. the *ſtipulation which a good conſcience makes to God.*

This kinde of vowe bindes all and every member of the Church of God. And the not keeping of it is the common ſinne of the worlde: for moſt men make not conſcience to perfourme that which they haue promiſed to God in Baptiſme: and therefore their Baptiſme is become unto them *the ſacrifice of fooles.* Eccleſiaſt. 4. 17. But conſidering we are bound in conſcience by this vowe, let vs hereafter endeauor to be as good as our word; and that ſhall be when we begin to die to our ſinnes

and

and rise to newnesse of life: we will seeme to haue care to keepe touch with men: what a shame is it for us then not to keepe couenant with God.

Againe a vow is taken for a promise of ceremoniall obedience, whereof reade Num. 6. and 30. and Levit. 27. This vow is peculiar to the old Testament and did not bind all men, but only such as had peculiar occasion to vowe, and thereupon bound themselues: as the Nazarites, and some other.

Thirdly a vow is taken for the performance of some outwarde and bodily exercises taken up of a mans owne accord, as being things in a mans owne liberty, without any commaundement of God: as the keeping of set times of fast, of praying or reading, the performance of set taskes, almes giuing, abstinence from certaine meates and drinkes, in the vse whereof through our owne weakenesse we feare any occasion of sinne. And this kind of vow is more peculiar to the new Testament.

In the making of it that it may be warrantable, foure things must be obserued. I. It must be agreeable to the worde of God. II. It must not be against a mans generall or particular calling. III. It must be in a mans power, and not against Christian liberty. IIII. It must be so made

made and be obserued without any opinion of merit or worship of God to this end alone, that it may be a means to exercise and cherish repentance and mortification, temperance, patience, and to shewe forth thankfulnesse to God.

A vowe thus made, binds conscience by vertue of Gods commandement. Eccles. 5.3. *When thou hast vowed a vow to God, defer not to pay it.*

And the vow once made continues to binde so long as the thing is in force which was the occasion of the vow. For example: A man desirous to practise sobriete and temperancy, finds that drinking of wine is hurtful to him: hereupon he vowes to God to drinke no wine: now this vow once made binds him till the estate of his body alter, and he feele no inconvenience in wine: and then it ceaseth to bind any longer.

Question. Whether Papists are bound in conscience to keepe the vowes of single life and voluntary poverty which they make, or no. *Ans.* No. Reasons. I. They are flat against Gods commandement: *But if they can not abstaine, let them marrie: for it is better to marry then to burne.* 1. Cor. 7. 9. *This we charged you of, that if there were any that would not worke, they should not eate.* 2. Thess. 3. 10. II. They are not in the power of him that voweth: as the promise of perpetuall chastity in single life. III. They abolish

christian liberty in the vse of the creatures and ordinances of God, as riches, and mariage, meat, drinke, apparell: making that necessary which God left to our liberty. I V. They are made that men may thereby merit life eternall & worship God: whereas Paul saith, 1. Tim. 4. 8. *Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godlinesse is profitable for all things.* Therefore they are better broken then kept.

§ 11. Of a single promise binding. *Aug. epist. 205.*

As for a single promise, it also bindes a man according as he will to whome the promise is made, though he be an heretike or an infidell. As for the purpose of the mind it binds not, but may upon conuenient cause be altered.

Isid. lib. 4. Synonym.

Yet we must remember that there are some cases in which a promise made binds not. I. If it be against Gods word. One saith well, *In euill promises cut off thy faith. It is a wicked promise which cannot be performed without an offence.* II. If he which makes it want reason or sufficient discretion. III. If he make the promise who can not bind himselfe: as a child under the gouernment of his parents. I V. If a man be induced to make his promise by fraud & guile. V. If the promise being at the first lawfull become afterward either impossible or unlawfull.

And though men be bound in conscience to keepe their promises: yet this hinders not but that

that there is and may be a good and lawfull vse of Indentures and obligations. For the bonde of conscience is betweene man and God: but the bonde of an obligation is onely betweene man and man. Abraham when hee bought a purchase of Ephron the Hittite, hee payed his money and made it sure before witnesse, Gen. 23, vers. 17.

Here we must consider the generall sinne of this age, which is to speak deceitfully euery one to his neighbour. It is an hard thing to find a mā that will stand to his word and lawfull promise. It is a rule of *Machiauell* that a man may practise many things against his faith, against charity, and humanity, and religion: and that it is not necessary to haue these vertues, but to counterfait and dissemble them. But let all such as feare God, make conscience of their word, because they are bound so to do: and hereby they shall resemble their heauenly father: who is true in all his promises; and they shall also bring foorth a notable fruite of the spirite, Galat. 5. vers. 22.

Hitherto I haue spoken of the cause that maketh conscience to giue iudgement. Now followeth the manner of iudgement. § 12. How conscience giues iudgement.

Cōscięce giues iudgemēt in or by a kind of reasoning or disputing, called a *practicall syllogisme*

Rom.2.15. *their reasonings [illegible] accusing or excusing eeb other.*

In the making of this reason, conscience hath two assistants, mind, and memory.

Minde tells what is law.

The mind is the storehouse and keeper of all manner of rules and principles. It may be compared to a booke of law, in which are set down the penall statutes of the lande. The duety of it is to preferre and present to the conscience rules of diuine law whereby it is to giue iudgement.

Memorie giues evidence.

Memory serues to bring to mind the particular actions which a mã hath done or not done, that conscience may determine of them.

Now conscience assisted by these twaine, proceeds in iudgement by a kinde of argumentation: an example whereof we may take from the conscience of a murderer, thus.

Euery murderer is cursed, saith the minde.

Thou art a murderer, saith conscience assisted by memory.

ergo, *Thou art accursed*, saith conscience, and so giueth her sentence.

§ 13. How many waies conscience giues iudgement.

To proceed: Conscience giues iudgement either of things past or things to come.

Of things past two waies, either by accusing & condẽning, or by excusing & absoluing. Ro.2.15.

To *accuse* is an action of conscience giuing iudge-

iudgement that this or that thing was euill don; and that still by reasoning on this manner.

Euery murder is a sinne:

This thy action is murder:

ergo, *This thy action is a sinne.*

To condemne is another action of the conscience ioyned with the former, whereby it giueth iudgement that a man by this or that sinne hath deserued death: on this maner.

Euery murderer deserueth a double death:

Thou art a murderer:

ergo, *Thou hast deserued a double death.*

These two actions are very forcible and terrible: for they are the *compunctions* and prickings that be in the heart. Act. 2. 37. they are the stripes as it were, of an iron rodde, wherewith the heart of a man smiteth it selfe, 2. Sam. 24. 10. And by reason of them, conscience is compared to a worme that neuer dieth but alwayes lyes gnawing and grabbling, and pulling at the heart of man, Marc. 9. 42. and causeth more paine and anguish, then any disease in the world, can.

The time when conscience perfourmes these actions is not before the sinne, or in the acte of sinning, but specially after the sinne is done and past. Reason. I. Before a man sinne, the deuill doth extenuate the fault & make sinne to be no

sinne. II. Corrupt affections doe for a time so blind and ouercast iudgement, that it doeth not see or at the least consider what is good or bad, till afterward.

Neither doth conscience accuse & condemne only for time present, but also long after a thing is done. The consciences of Iosephs brethren accuse them 22. yeres after they had solde him into Egypt. Gen. 42. 21.

The effect of the accusing and condemning conscience is to stir vp sundry passions and motions in the heart, but specially these five.

The first is *shame*, which is an affection of the heart, whereby a man is greeued and displeased with him-selfe, that hee hath done any euill: and this shame sheweth it selfe by the rising of the bloode from the heart to the face.

Yet wee must here remember that euen such as haue the pardon of their sinnes, and are not guilty, may be ashamed and blush, Rom. 6. 21. *What fruite had yee in those things, whereat ye now blush, or, be ashamed.* Whereas those which are most guilty may be without all shame. Ierem. 6. 15. *Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, nay, they were not ashamed, neither could they haue any shame*: because they are growen to some great

height in sinne, Eph.4.18.

The second passion is *sadnesse* and sorrowe: which is commonly thought to be nothing else but *Melancholy*: but betweene them twaine, there is great difference. Sorow that comes by melancholly ariseth onely of that humour annoying the body, but this other sorrow ariseth of a mans sinnes for which his conscience accuseth him: Melancholly may be cured by phisicke: this sorow can not be cured by any thing but by the blood of Christ.

The third is *feare*: in causing whereof conscience is very forcible. If a man had all the delights and pleasures that heart can wish, they can not doe him any good, if conscience be guiltie. *Belshazzar* when hee was in the middest of all his delights, and saw the handwriting vpon the wall: *his countenance changed, his thoughts troubled him, his ioynts loosed, and his knees smote togither*, Dan.5. 6. Yea the guiltie conscience will make a man afraid, if hee see but a wormc peepe out of the ground, or a silly creature to goe crosse his way, or if hee see but his owne shadowe on a suddaine, or if he do but forecast an euill with himselfe. Proverb.28.1. *The wicked flyeth when no man pursueth him.*

Terrors of cõscience whẽ they are more vehe-

cause other passions in the body, as exceeding heate, like that which is in the fitt of an ague, the rising of the entrals towardes the mouth: and swounding, as experience hath often shewed. And the writer of the booke of Wisedome saith truly, cap. 17. vers. 10. *It is a fearefull thing when malice is condemned by her owne testimonie: and a conscience that is touched, alwaies ever fore-cast cruell things. For feare is nothing else, but the betraying of the succours, that reason offereth, &c. they that did endure the night that was intolerable, &c. sometimes were troubled with monstrous visions, and sometimes they swouned, as though their owne soule should betray them: for a sudden feare not looked for, came upon them.*

a The darknes of Egipt.

The fourth is *desperation*, whereby a man through the vehement and constant accusation of his conscience, comes to be out of all hope of the pardon of his sinnes. This made Saul, Achitophel, and Iudas, to hang them selues: this makes many in these daies to doe the like, as appeareth by the declarations of such as haue bene preserued, when they were about to hang or drowne them selues, or to cutt their owne throats.

The last is a *perturbation* or disquietnes of the whole man: wherby all the powers & faculties of

of the whole man are forth of order, Isa. 57. 20. *The wicked are like the raging of the sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*

Thus much of the two first actions of conscience, which are to accuse and condemne: the second followeth to excuse and absolue.

To excuse, is an action of the conscience giuing iudgement that the thing is well done.

To absolue, is an action of the conscience giuing iudgement that a man is free or cleare frō fault and so from punishment.

Froth these two actions arise some special affections: I. *boldnes* and *confidence*, Prov. 28. 1. *The righteous are bold as a lyon.* II. *ioy* and *reioycing*, 2. Cor. 1. 12. *Our reioycing is the testimonie of my conscience, that in all simplicitie and godly purenes I haue had my conuersation in the world.* Hence it is said, that a good conscience is a continuall feast.

Hitherto I haue spoken how conscience gines iudgement of things done and past: now followeth her iudgement of things to be done.

Conscience giues iudgement of things to come, by foretelling and as it were saying inwardly in the heart, that the thing may be well done or ill done. Of this kinde of iudgement euery man may haue experience in him selfe,

when

when he is about to enterprise any business either good or badde.

By this we may see the goodnes of God to all men. If a man beeing to make an vnknowne iourney, should finde one that would goe with him and shew him the way, with al the turnings thereof, he could not but take it for a great point of curtesie. Wee are pilgrimes in this world, our life is our iourney: God also hath appointed our conscience to be our companion and guide, to shew vs what course we may take and what we may not.

And here it must be noted, that in all things to be done, conscience is of great force & beares a great stroke. For, *This is the beginning of a good vvorke, that the conscience first of all give her iudgement truely, that the thing may be done, and is acceptable to God.* Rom. 14. 23. *whatsoever is not of faith*, that is, whatsoever is not done of a settled perswasion in iudgement and conscience out of Gods word, howsoever men iudge of it, *is sinne.* Againe, God regardes not the outward pompe of the action or the doer, but obedience and especially the obedience of the heart: therefore vnlesse the conscience first of all approoue the thing to be good and agreeable to Gods will, it can be nothing else but a sinne. And he that shall doe a

thing,

thing, becauſe it is good in his owne eyes, not knowing that God doeth allow of it, preferres him-ſelfe before God, and diſobaies him as the ſeruant that in his maſters houſe will not doe his maſters will but his owne will.

From this former rule ariſe three other: the firſt, *whatſoeuer is done vvith a doubting conſcience is a ſinne.* For example: ſome beleeuers in the Primitiue Church held, that ſtill after the aſcenſion of Chriſt there remained a difference betweene meate and meate, and therefore it was a ſcruple to them to eate of ſundrie kinde of meates: now put the caſe, by example they are drawne on to eate ſwines fleſh, or ſome other thing which they thinke is forbidden: and there is no queſtion but in ſo doing they haue ſinned, as Paul prooueth, Rom.14.v.14. *I know and am perſuaded through the Lord Ieſus, that there is nothing vncleane of it ſelfe: but vnto him that* iudgeth any *thing vncleane, it is vncleane*: and v. 23. *He that doubteth is condemned, if he eate: becauſe he eateth not of faith.*

The ſecond, *Whatſoeuer thing is done vvith an erroneous conſcience, is a ſinne.* For example, In the primitiue Church diuers of the Gentiles helde this errour, that fornication

was

was a thing indifferent, and therefore conscience told them that they might doe it: and yet neuertheless fornication in them was a sinne, because conscience erred in her iudgement. And euill remaines euill, though conscience say the contrarie a thousand times.

*Erronious conscience bindeth. For he that iudgeth a thing to be euill, if he doe it, hath sinned, as much as in him lieth.

The third. *What soeuer is done* * *Against conscience, though it erre & be deceiued, is sinne in the doer.* Example. An Anabaptist holding it vtterly vnlawfull to sweare, is brought before a magistrate, and vrged either through feare or some like cause, takes an oath & that against his owne conscience: now the question is, whether he hath sinned or no. *Ans.* He hath indeed sinned, not so much because he hath taken an oath, for that is the ordinance of God: but because he hath taken an oath in a bad manner, that is, against his conscience, and therefore not in faith.

Thus it is manifest that conscience beares a great stroke in all things that are to be saide or done. And heteby we are aduertised of many things. First, if a thing done without good direction of cõscience be a sinne, then much more that which is done without direction of Gods word is a flatte sinne: for without direction of Gods word conscience can giue no good direction. And if God will holde that for a sinne which is done without direction of his word,

then

then no doubt Gods word ministers sufficient direction for all actions whatsoeuer: so as if a man be to put but a bit of bread in his mouth, it can so farre forth direct him, that in doing of it he shall be able to please God. If this were not true, mans case were most miserable. For then we should sinne in manifold actions, and that without remedie. And here by the Word, I meane nothing but the Scriptures of the olde and new Testament, which containe in themselues sufficient direction for all actions. As for the law of nature, though it afford indeede some direction; yet is it corrupt, imperfect, vncerten: and whatsoeuer is right and good therin is contained in the writtē word of God. And as for the best vnwrittē traditions, let al the Papists in the world answer if they cā, how I may in cōscience be perswaded that they are the word of God. If they say that the auncient fathers of the primitive Church auouch in their writings that they are Apostolicall traditions, I answer againe, how shall I know and be certen in conscience that the fathers subiect to errour, in saying so haue not erred.

Againe we learne hence, that a good intention is not sufficient to make a good worke, vnlesse withall conscience can giue iudgement that God doth approoue the action. This shewes the

the ignorance of our people, that when as in their dealings they runne vpon a good meaning, then alwaies they thinke they doe well and please God.

Thirdly, hence it appeares that all things deuised by man for the worship of God, are flatte sinnes: because conscience can not say of them that they please God. Esa. 29. 13. Mark. 7. 7.

Lastly, wee learne here that ignorance of Gods will and word, is a daungerous thing, and makes the life of man to abound, yea to flowe with a sea of offences against God. Men commonly thinke that if they keepe themselues frō periurie, blasphemie, murder, theft, whordome, all is well with them: but the truth is, that so long as they liue in ignorance, they want right and true direction of conscience out of Gods word, and therfore there best actions are sinnes, euen their eating and drinking, their sleeping and waking, their buying and selling, their speach and silence, yea their praying and seruing of God. For they doe these actions either of custome, or example, or necessitie, as beasts doe, and not of faith: because they know not Gods will touching things to be done or left vndone. The consideration of this point should make every man most carefull to seeke for knowledge

ledge of Gods word, and daily to increase in it, that he may in all his affaires haue Gods lawes to be the men of his counsell, Psal. 119.24. that he may giue heede to them as to a light shining in a darke place 2. Pet. 1.19. that he may say with Peter, when Christ commanded him to launch forth into the deepe, and to cast forth his net: *Lord we haue bin all night, and haue catched nothing, yet* in thy word *will I let downe my net*, Luk. 5.5.

CAP. III.

Of the kindes of conscience: and of conscience regenerate.

Onscience is either good or badde.

Good conscience is that which rightly according to Gods worde, excuseth and comforteth. For the excellence, goodnes, and dignitie of conscience, standes not in accusing, but in excusing. And by doing any sinne whatsoeuer

to

to giue an occasion to the conscience to accuse or condemne, is to wound it and to offend it. Thus Paul saith that the Corinthians wounded the consciences of their weake brethren, when they vsed their libertie as an occasion of offence to them 1. Cor. 8. 9. 12. Againe, he calleth a good conscience, a conscience without offence, that is, which hath no stoppe or impediment to hinder it from excusing, Act. 24. 16.

Good conscience, is either good by creation or by regeneration.

Good by creation was the conscience of Adam, which in the estate of innocencie did onely excuse & could not accuse him for anything: though it may be, an aptnes to accuse was not wanting, if afterward an occasion should be offered. And hence we haue further direction to consider what a good conscience is, namely such an one as by the order set downe in the creation, excuseth onely without accusing. For accuse is a defect in the conscience, following after the first creation. For naturally there is an agreement and harmony betweene the parts and the whole: but if the conscience should naturally accuse, there should be a dissent and disagreement and diuision betweene the conscience and the man himselfe.

Regenerate conscience is that which being cor-

corrupt by nature, is renewed and purged by faith in the blood of Christ. For to the regenerating of the conscience, there is required a conversion or chaunge; because by nature all mens consciences since the fall are euill, and none are good but by grace. The instrument seruing to make this chaunge is faith, Act.15.9. *Faith purifieth the heart*. The meritorious cause is the blood of Christ, Hebr. 9.14. *How much more shal the blood of Christ &c. purge your conscience frō dead works to serue the liuing God.*

The propertie of regenerate conscience is twofold: Christian libertie, & Certentie of saluation. Because both these haue their place, not in the outward man, but in the spirit and conscience.

Christian libertie, is a spirituall and holy freedome, purchased by Christ. § 1. Of christiā liberty.

I say, it is *spirituall*, first to put a difference betweene it and ciuill libertie, which standes in outward and bodily freedomes and priuiledges: secondly to confute the Iewes, that looke for earthly libertie by Christ: and the Anabaptists, who imagine a freedome from all authoritie of magistrates in the kingdome of Christ.

Againe, I say it is an *holy freedome* to confute the Libertines, who thinke that by the death of Christ, they haue libertie to liue as

they list.

Lastly I say that it is *purchased by Christ*, to shew the author thereof, Gal. 5. 1. *Stand fast in the libertie wherewith Christ hath made you free.* And to confute the Papists, whose doctrine in effect is thus much, that this libertie is procured indeede by Christ, but is continued partly by Christ, and partly by the man himselfe.

Christian libertie hath three parts.

The first, is a freedome from the justification of the morall lawe. For he that is a member of Christ, is not bound in conscience to bring the perfect righteousnes of the law in his owne person for his justification before God, Gal. 5. 1. with v. 3.

Hence it followeth, that he that is a Christian, is likewise freed from the curse and condemnation of the law, Rom. 8. 1. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.* Gal. 3. 13. *Christ hath redeemed vs from the curse of the law, when he was made a curse for vs.*

By this first part of Christian libertie, it appeares that there cannot be any justification of a sinner by workes of grace before God. For he that will be justified but by one worke, *is debter to the whole lawe*, Gal. 3. 3. but no man that is a member of Christ is debter to the whole law; for his libertie is to be free in that point:

point: therefore no man is iustified so much as by one worke.

The second part, is freedome from the rigour of the law, which exacteth perfect obedience and condemneth all imperfection, Rom. 6.14. *Sinne hath no more dominion ouer you: for ye are not vnder the law but vnder grace.* 1. Ioh. 5. 3. *This is the loue of God, that ye keepe his commaundements: and his commaundements are not grieuous.*

Hence it followeth that God will accept of our imperfect obedience, if it be sincere: yea he accepts the will, desire, and indeauour to obay for obedience it selfe, Malach. 3. 17. *And I vvill spare them as a man spareth his owne sonne that serueth him.*

The third part is, that the conscience is freed from the bond of the ceremoniall law, Gal. 3. 25. *But after that faith is come, we are no more vnder a schoolemaster.* Eph. 2. 15. *And hath broken the stoppe of the partition wall, in abrogating through his flesh, the lavv of commaundements vvhich standeth in ordinances.* Colos. 2. 14. *And hath put out the hand vvriting of ordinances vvhich vvas against vs.* v. 16. *Let no man therefore condemne you in meate and drinke, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moone, &c.*

Hence it followeth, that all Christians may freely without scruple of cõscience, vse all things indifferent, so be it the manner of vsing them be good.

And first, when I say that all may vse them, I vnderstand a two-fold vse; naturall, or spirituall.

The naturall vse, is either to releeue our necessities, or for honest delite. Thus the Psalmist saith, that God giues not onely bread to strengthen the heart of man, but also wine to make glad the heart, & oyle to make the face to shine, Psal. 104. 15. and God hath put into his creatures infinite varieties of colours, sauours, tastes, and formes, to this end that men might take delite in the. Hence it follows, that *Recreation* is lawfull, and a part of Christian libertie, if it be well vsed. By *recreation* I vnderstand exercises and sports, seruing to refresh either the bodie or the minde: and that they may be well vsed, two rules especially must be remembred. The first, that *lawfull recreation* stands only in the vse of things indifferent. For if the things be commanded by God, there is no sporting in them: or if they be forbidden, there is no vsing of them at all. Vpon this ground, sundrie kindes of recreation are to be neglected. As I. the dauncing commonly vsed in these daies, in which men and women,

yong-

yongmen and maids, all mixed together, daunce to the sound of the instrument or voyce in time and measure, with many wanton gestures, and that in solemne meetings after great feasts. This exercise cannot be numbred among things indifferent; for experience sheweth, that it hath beene vsually either a fruit or a follower of great wickednes, as idolatrie, fornication, drunkennes; hereupon, one well compared it to a *circle, whose center was the deuill. Againe, if we must giue an account of euery idle worde, then also of euery idle gesture and pace: & what account can be giuen of these paces backward and forward, of caprings, iumpes, gambols, turnings, with many other friskes of lightnes and vanitie, more beseeming goates and apes, of whome they are commonly vsed, then men. Whereas Salomon esteemed laughter as madnesse, he would (no doubt) haue condemned our common lascivious dauncing much more for madnesse, laughter beeing but the least part of it. II. Dicing, which is precisely the casting of a lotte, not to be vsed at our pleasures, but in matters of weight and importance. And of this kinde are all games, the ground whereof are not the sleight of mans witte, but lotte alone. III. Playes and enterludes, that stande in the representation of the vices and misde-

*Tripudium est circulus cuius centrũ Diabolus.

meanour of the world. For if it be not lawfull to name vices, vnles it be in the way of dislike, Eph. 5.3. much lesse is it warrantable to gesture and represent vice in the way of recreation and delite. The second rule is, that recreation must be a sparing, moderate, and lawfull vse of things indifferent, according to the rules following.

pag. 103. and 104.

The spirituall vse is, when we take occasion by the creatures to meditate and speake of heauenly things: as, vpon the sight of the vine and the branches thereof, to consider the mysticall coniunction betweene Christ and his Church: by the sight of the rainbow to think of the promise of God of not drowning the world by waters: and by any thing that befalls, to take occasion to consider in it the wisdome, goodnes, iustice, mercie, providence of God, &c.

I adde further, that things indifferent, as bondage, outward libertie, riches, pouertie, single estate, marriage, meate, drinke, apparrell, buildings, may be vsed *freely*, because they are neither commanded by God nor forbidden: and in themselues considered, they may be vsed or not vsed without breach of conscience.

The right manner of vsing them, is to sanctifie them by the word and praier, 1. Tim. 4.3,4. and not onely some of them, but the vse of them all. Meate, drinke, and marriage are thus to be sancti-

sanctified as the place before noted declareth. Paul sanctified his iourney on this manner, Act. 21.5. And the Iewes were commanded to dedicate their houses at the first entrance, Deut. 20.5. By this dedication we may well vnderstand not onely the letting of the house, or the prouiding of a tenant, but also the sanctifying of it by invocation of Gods name, that by his blessing the place with the roomes thereof might serue for their benefit and comfort. And on this maner to blesse our dwelling places when we first enter into them, is the best way that can be to preserue them from the casualties of fire within, and lightning from heauen, and from the annoiance and molestation of euill spirits, and other iudgements of God.

Things indifferent are sanctified by Gods word, because it shewes what things we may vse, and what things we may not: and if we may vse them, in what manner it is to be done. And to this purpose the scriptures afford foure rules.

The first, that all things must be done to Gods glorie, 1. Cor. 10. 31. *whether ye eate or drinke or what soeuer ye doe, doe all to the glorie of God.* And that this may be performed, things indifferent must be vsed as signes and tables, in which we may shew forth the graces & vertues

that God hath wrought in the heart. For example: we must so make our apparrell both for matter and fashion, and so weare it, that it may in some sort set forth to the beholder our modestie, sobrietie, frugalitie, humilitie, &c. that hereby he may be occasioned to say, behold a graue, sober, modest person: and so of the rest. And the common sinne of this time is, that meat, drinke, apparrell, buildings, are vsed as banners displaied to set forth to the world mans wit, excesse, and pride of heart.

The second: We must suffer our selues lawfully to be limited and restrained in the ouermuch or ouer-common vse of things indifferent. I say the ouer-common vse, because it is not Gods will vtterly and absolutely to barre vs of the vse of such things. Now the restrainers of our vse are two, the first is the lawe of charitie. For as charitie giues place to pietie, so Christian libertie in the vse of outwarde things, giues place to charitie. And the law of charitie is, that we should not vse things indifferent to the hurt or offence of our brother, 1. Cor. 8. 13.

Question. Whether may a man vse his libertie before such as are weake, and not yet perswaded of their libertie. *Answer.* Some are weake of simple ignorance, or because they

they haue beene deceiued by the abuſe of long cuſtome: and yet are willing to be reformed. And before ſuch wee muſt abſtaine, leaſt by example we draw them to ſinne by giuing occaſion to them of doing that whereof they doubt. Againe ſome are weake upon affected ignorance or of malice, and in the preſence of ſuch we need not abſtaine. Vpon this ground Paul who circumciſed Timothy would not circumciſe Titus.

The ſecond reſtrainer is the wholeſome lawes of men whether ciuill or Eccleſiaſticall. For howſoeuer things indifferent after the law is once made of them, remaine ſtill indifferent in themſelues: yet obedience to the law is neceſſary, and that for conſcience ſake. Actes 15. verſ 28.

The third: we muſt uſe things indifferent ſo farre foorth as they ſhall further us in godlineſſe. For we ought to doe all things not only to the edification of others, but alſo of our own ſelues. And therefore it is a flat abuſe of chriſtian liberty, for men ſo to pamper their bodies with meate and drinke, that thereby they diſable themſelues to heare Gods word, to pray, to giue good counſell, to doe the ordinary works of their callings.

The fourth: things indifferent muſt be uſed

with

within the compasse of our callings, that is, according to our ability, degree, state and condition of life. And it is a common abuse of this liberty in our dayes, that the meane man will be in meate, drinke, apparell, building, as the gentleman, the gentleman as the knight, the knight as the lord or Earle.

Now then things indifferent are sanctified to vs by the worde, when our consciences are resolued out of the word that we may use them, so it be in the manner before named, and according to the rules here set downe.

They are sanctified by prayer, when wee craue at Gods handes the right use of them, and hauing obtained the same, giue him thanks therefore. Colos. 3. v. 17. *What soever yee doe in worde or deede, doe all in the name of our Lorde Iesus, giving thankes to God the father by him.*

Thus much of Christian liberty, by which wee are admonished of sundry duties. I. to labour to become good members of Christ of what estate or condition soeuer we be. The liberties of the citie of Rome made not onely Romanes borne but euen the men of other countreyes seeke to be citizens thereof. Act. 22. 28. The priuiledges of the Iewes in Persia made many become Iewes, Hest. 8. 17. O then, much more

more should the spirituall liberty of conscience purchased by the blood of Christ, moque us to seeke for the kingdome of heauen, and that we might become good members thereof. II. Againe by this we are taught to study, learne, and loue the scriptures, in which our liberties are recorded. Wee make account of our charters wherby we holde our earthly liberties, yea wee gladly reade them and acquaint our selues with them: what a shame then will it be for vs to make no more account of the word of God that is the law of spirituall liberty. Iam. 2. v. 16. III. Lastly we are aduertised most heartily to obey and serue God according to his worde, for that is the ende of our liberty: the seruant doeth all his businesse more chearefully in the hope and expectation he hath of liberty. Againe our liberty most of all appeares in our seruice and obedience, because the seruice of God is perfect freedome; as on the contrary in the disobedience of Gods commandements standes our spirituall bondage.

The second property of conscience is an vnfallible certenty of the pardon of sinne & life euerlasting. That this point may be cleared, I will handle the question betweene vs and Papistes touching the certenty of saluation. And that I may proceede in order we must distinguish the kinds

§ 2. Of certentie of saluation.

kindes of certenty. First of all, Certenty is either Vnfallible or Conjecturall. Vnfallible, wherein a man is neuer disappointed. Conjecturall, which is not so euident, because it is grounded onely upon likelihoodes. The first all Papistes graunt, but the second they deny in the matter of saluation. Againe certenty is either of faith, or experimentall, which Papistes call *morall*. Certenty of faith is, whereby any thing is certenly beleeued: and it is either generall or speciall. Generall certenty, is to beleeue assuredly that the word of God is trueth it selfe, and this both wee and papistes allow. Speciall certenty is by faith to apply the promise of saluation to our selues, and to beleeue without doubt that remission of sinnes by Christ and life euerlasting belongs unto us. This kind of certenty we holde and maintaine, and Papists with one consent deny it, acknowledging no assurance but by hope. *Morall* certenty is that which proceedes from sanctification and good workes, as signes and tokens of true faith. This wee both allowe, yet with some difference. For they esteeme all certenty that comes by workes to be uncerten and often to deceiue: but wee doe otherwise if the workes be done in uprightnesse of heart.

The question then is, whether a man in this life may ordinarily without reuelation be vnfallibly

fallibly certen of his owne salvation, first of all and principally by faith, and then secondly by such workes as are inseperable companions of faith. We hold this for a cleare & ruddent principle of the word of God, and contrariwise the Papists deny it wholly. I will therefore prouue the truth by some fewe arguments, and then answer the common obiections.

Argument 1. That which the spirit of God doth first of all testifie in the heart and conscience of any man, and then afterward fully confirme, is to be beleeued of the same man as vnfallibly certen: but the spirite of God first of all doeth testifie to some men, namely true beleeuers that they are the sonnes of God: and afterward confirmes the same vnto them: therfore men are vnfallibly to beleeue their owne adoption. Now that the spirit of God doth giue this testimony to the conscience of man, the scripture is more than plaine. Rom. 8. 15. *Ye haue receiued the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The same spirit beareth witnes with our spirit, that we are the sonnes of God.* Answere is made, that this testimony of the spirite is giuen onely by an experiment or feeling of an inward delight or peace, which breeds in vs not an infallible but a coniecturall certenty. And I answere gaine that this exposition is flat against

against the text. For the spirit of adoption is said here not to make vs to thinke or speake, but to cry *Abba, Father*: and crying to God as to a father argues courage, confidence, & boldnesse. Againe the same spirit of adoption is opposed to the *spirit of bondage* causing *feare*: & therefore it must needs be a spirit giuing assurance of liberty, & by that means driuing away distrustfull feares. And the end, no doubt, why the holy ghost comes into the heart as a witnes of adoption, is, that the truth in this case hidden & therfore doubtful, might be cleared and made manifest. If God himself haue appointed that a doubtfull truth among men shal be confirmed and put out of doubt by the mouth of two or three witnesses, it is absurd to thinke that the testimony of God himselfe knowing all things and taking vpon him to be a witnes, should be coniecturall. S. Bernard had learned better diuinity when he saide, *who is iust, but he that being loued of God, returnes loue to him againe: which is not done but by the spirit of God* * reuealing by faith *vnto man the eternall purpose of God concerning his salvation in time to come: which revelation vndoubtedly is nothing else but an infusion of spirituall grace: by which, whilest the deedes of the flesh are mortified, the man is prepared to the kingdome of God, receiving withall that*

Bernard. epist. 107.

* marke it well.

that wherebyhe may presume that he is loved and loue againe.

Furthermore that the spirit of God doth not only perswade men of their adoption, but also confirme the same unto them, it is most manifest. Eph. 4. 30. *Greeve not the spirit whereby yee are sealed vp to the day of redemption.* And 1. v. 13. *After ye beleeved, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance.* 2. Cor. 1. 21. *It is God that hath sealed vs & giuen vs the earnest of his spirit in our harts.* Here the words of *sealing* and *earnest* are to be considered. For things that passe too and fro among men, though they be in question, yet when the seale is put too, they are made out of doubt: and therfore when God by his spirite is said to seale the promise in the heart of euery particular beleuer, it signifieth that he giues unto them euident assurance that the promise of life belongs unto them. And the giuing of earnest is an unfallible token unto him that receiueth it, that the bargaine is ratified, and that he shall receiue the things agreed upon. And it were a great dishonour unto God to thinke that the earnest of his owne spirite giuen vnto vs should be an euidence of eternall life not vnfallible but coniecturall.

Argument.

Argument 2. The faith of the elect or saving faith is a *certen* perswasion & a *particular* perswasion of remission of sinne and life euerlasting. Touching the first of these twain, namely that faith is a certen perswasion, yea that certenty is of the nature of faith, it appeares by expresse testimonies of scripture, Matth. 14. 31. *O thou of little faith, why hast thou doubted?* and 21. v. 21. *If ye haue faith and doubt not.* Iam. 1. 6. *Let him aske in faith, and wauer not: for he that wauereth is like a wave of the sea, tost of the winde, and carried away.* Rom. 4. 20. *Neither did he doubt of the promise of God through vnbeliefe, but was strengthened in faith.* I will not stand longer on this point which is not denyed of any.

Touching the second part of my reason, that faith is a particular perswasion applying things beleeued, I prooue it thus. The propertie of faith is to receiue the promise, Galat. 3. 14. and the thing promised which is Christ with his spirit, Ioh. 1. 12. Now Christ is receiued by a particular application, as will appeare if we doe but marke the end and vse of the ministery of the word and of the sacraments. For when God giues any blessing to man, it is to be receiued by man as God giueth it. Now God giues Christ or at the least offereth him not generally to man-

mankinde, but to the seuerall and particular members of the Church. In the Lords supper, as in euery sacrament, there is a relation or analogie betweene the outward signes & the things signified. The action of the minister giuing the bread and the wine representeth Gods action in giuing Christ with his benefits to the particular communicants: againe the action of receiuing the bread and wine seuerally, representeth another spiritualll action of the beleeuing heart which applyeth Christ unto it selfe for the pardon of sinne and life euerlasting. Papists yeeld not to this: yet if they refuse to maintaine this analogie, they outerturne the sacrament and dissent from antiquity. Augustine saith, *The body of Christ is ascended into heaven: some may answer & say, How shall I hold him being absent? how shall I reach up mine hand to heaven that I may lay hold of him sitting there? Send up thy faith, and thou hast laid hold of him.* And what is more cõmon thẽ another saying of his. *What meanest thou to prepare thy belly and teeth, Beleeue and thou hast eaten.* Againe Eph. 3.v. 12. Paul saith, *By Christ we have boldnesse and entrance with confidẽce by faith in him.* In which words are set downe two notable effects and fruits of faith: boldnesse, and confidence. Boldnesse is, when a poore sinner dare come into the

August. tract. 50. on Iohn.

presence of God not being terrified with the threatnings of the lawe not with the consideration of his owne unworthinesse, and with the manifolde assaultes of the deuill: and it is more than certenty of Gods fauour. Now whereas Papistes answere that this libertye or boldnesse in comming unto God proceedes of a generall faith, they are farre wide. It is not possible that a generall persuasion of the goodnesse and trueth of God and of his mercie in Christ should breede confidence and boldnesse in the heart of a guilty sinner, and no example can be brought hereof. This generall faith concerning the articles of our beleefe, was no doubt in Cain, Saul, Achitophel, Iudas, yea in the deuill himselfe: and yet they despaired and some of them hangde away themselues: and the deuill for all his faith trembleth before God. Wherefore that faith which is the roote of these excellent vertues of boldnesse and confidence must needes be a speciall faith, that is, a large and plentifull persuasion of the pardon of a mans owne sinnes and of life everlasting. Againe Hebr. 11. v. 1. faith is called *hypostasis*, that is, a substance or subsistance of things hoped for: where faith in the matter of our saluation and other like things, is made to goe beyond hope: for hope waites for things to come till they

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haue a being in the perſon hoping, but faith in preſent giues a ſubſiſting or being vnto them. This can not be that generall faith (of Papiſtes tearmed Catholike) for it comes ſhort of hope, but it muſt needes be a ſpeciall faith that makes us vndoubtedly beleeue our owne election, adoption, iuſtification and ſaluation by Chriſt. And to this purpoſe haue ſome of the fathers ſaide excellent well. Auguſtine ſaith, *I demaund of thee, O ſinner, doſt thou beleeve Chriſt or no? thou ſaieſt, I beleeve what beleeveſt thou? that hee can freely forgive thee all thy ſinnes. Thou haſt that vvhich thou haſt beleeved.* Ambroſe ſaieth, *This is a thing ordained of God that hee vvhich beleeveth in Chriſt ſhould be ſaved without any vvorke, by faith alone freely receiving remiſsion of ſinnes.* And with Ambroſe I ioyne the teſtimony of Heſichius vpon Leuiticus, who ſaieth, *God pitying mankinde, vvhen hee ſavve it diſabled for the fulfilling of the vvorkes of the lavve, vvilled that man ſhoulde be ſaved by grace vvithout the vvorkes of the lavve. And grace proceeding of mercie is apprehended by faith alone vvithout vvorkes.* Whereas in both theſe places, faith is oppoſed generally to all workes, and is withall ſaide to apprehende

Auguſt. de verbis domini ſerm. 7.

Ambroſ. on 1. Cor. 1. cap.

Heſich. on Levit.

and receiue, yea alone to apprehend and receiue grace and remission of sinnes, they cannot be understood of a generall but of a speciall applying faith. Bernard hath these words, *If thou beleeuest that thy sinnes can not be blotted out but by him against whome thou hast sinned, thou doest well: but goe yet further, & beleeue that hee pardoneth thy sinnes. This is the testimony which the Holy Ghost giueth in our hearts, saying, Thy sinnes are forgiuen thee. For so the Apostle thinketh that a man is iustified freely by faith.* Papists being much choked with this place, make answer that S. Bernard doeth not say that wee must beleeue the pardon of our sinnes absolutely without respect of workes, but that hee requires the condition of our conversion and repentance, as signes whereby this persuasion is wrought. I answer againe that hee auoucheth plainly, the generall faith whereby the points of religion are beleeued, to be but a beginning or rudiment of faith, and therefore not sufficient vnlesse we goe further and apply the grace of God to our selues by faith simply without respect of any condition performed on mans parte. Indeede I graunt that the vrueth of conversion and other workes are by him mentioned afterwarde, but that was for this ende to shewe how any man may haue a sensible and euident

Bernard. serm. 1. de Annunc. Maria.

euident experience by workes, as fruits of the pardon of his owne sinnes & life euerlasting, which he beleeueth.

Argument. 3. S. Iohn penned his first epistle that he might shewe vnto the Church of God a way how they might ordinarily and fully be assured of the loue of God and of eternall life: and therefore he affordeth vs many pregnant testimonies for this purpose. 1. Ioh. 2. v. 3. *And by this we know that we haue knowen him, if wee keepe his commandements.* And v. 5. *Hee which keepes his word, in him is the word of God truely accomplished: by this vvee know that wee are in him.* cap. 3. 10. *By this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devill.* And v. 19. *By this vve know that we are of the trueth, and before him vvee shall make our hearts confident.* cap. 4. 13. *By this we know that we dwell in him and hee in vs, because he hath given vs of his spirit.* cap. 5. 2. *By this vvee knowe that we love the sonnes of God, when we love god and keepe his commandements.* vers. 13. *I haue written these things vnto you vvhich beleeve in the name of the sonne of God, that yee may knowve that you haue life eternall.* To these testimonies first of all answere is made that none of them doe necessarily imply a certentie of diuine faith; because wee are saide to knowe the thinges

which wee learne by coniectures. Behold a silly and poore shifte. Saint Iohn saieth, cap. 1. vers. 4. *These things wee write unto you that your ioy may be full.* Now it is but an uncertein ioy that riseth by coniecturall knowledge. Againe this knowledge brings foorth *confidence and boldnesse even before God*, c. 3. v. 19, 21. and therefore it can not but include an infallible certenty: and to put it out of question that the knowledge here mentioned is the knowledge of divine faith, or as unfallible as it is or can be, it is added, cap. 4. 16. *And wee have knowen and beleeved the love which God hath towards us.* Secondly it is answered, that all these speeches are generall and not concerning particular men: but it is false: for when Saint Iohn saieth (*wee know*) hee speakes of himselfe and includes the rest of the Church in the same condition with himselfe. Now hee himselfe was fully assured of his owne saluation. For Christ a little before his departure out of the worlde, did comfort all his disciples partly by renewing the promise of life euerlasting and of the presence of his spirite unto them; and partly by praying unto the father for their finall preseruation: so as they could not but be fully resolued of their happy estate both in this life and in the life to come.

Argument.

v. Argument. 4. Abrahams faith was a full perswasion whereby hee applyed the promise vnto himselfe, Rom. 4. v. 21. And this faith of his is an example propounded vnto vs according to which we are to beleeue: and therefore hee is called the *father of the faithfull* ver. 16. and Paul hauing set downe the nature and effectes of his faith, saith, *It was written not onely for him but also for vs which beleeue*, v. 22. It is obiected that Abrahams faith was not of salvation but it concerned his issue. In his olde age as Paul saieth, Rom. 4. v. 18. *Abraham above hope beleeved that hee should be the father of many nations: according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seede be. Answer.* Wee must distinguish the obiect of faith, which is either *principall* or *lesse principall*. Principall, is alwaies Christ with his benefites: lesse principall are other lesse and particular benefites obtained by Christ. As of Abrahams faith the obiect lesse principall was a carnall seede or issue: and the principall obiect most of all respected as the foundation of all other blessings, was the blessed seede Christ Iesus. Galat. 3. v. 16. *To Abraham and his seede were the promises made. Hee saith not, And to the seeds, as of many: but,*

and to thy seed, as of one, which is Christ. And v. 29. *If yee be Christs, then Abrahams seed.* Thus it is plaine that issue was neither promised nor desired but with respect to Christ, who couldе not have descended of Abraham if he had bene wholly without seed.

Having thus alledged some arguments for the truth, I come now to consider the obiections of the Papistes. *Obiect. I.* Iob beeing a righteous man wanted certenty of grace in him selfe. Iob. 9. v. 20. *If I vvoulde iustifie my selfe, mine owne mouth shall condemne me: if I vvoulde be perfect, he shall iudge me wicked: though I vvere perfect, yet my soule shall not knowe it.* Againe vers. 28. *I am afraid of all my workes, knowing that thou vvilt not iudge me innocent. Answer.* Bildad in the former chapter had extolled the iustice of God: & Iob in this chapter giues assent thereto, saying vers. 2. *I knowe verely it is so*: and hee likewise spendes the whole chapter in magnifying the iustice of God: and hauing propounded this ende of his speech, hee doth not speake of him selfe and his owne estate[b] simply, as it is considered in it selfe: but as he esteemed himselfe being compared with God, specially then, when hee entereth into a straight examination of his creature. And so must the

[b] Thus Hierome vnderstands the chap.

the speach be vnderstoode, *If I were perfect, my soule should not know it*, that is, I will not acknowledge or stand vpon any righteousnes of mine owne, when God shal enter into iudgement with me. And thus much the very Elect angels beeing in possession of heauen, and therefore hauing more then assurance thereof, can not but say when they are compared with God. Againe, the words according to the originall, are commonly of all and so may well be translated thus, *Am I perfect: I know not my soule, I abhorre my life*: that is, if I thinke my selfe perfect, I haue no respect of mine owne soule: or thus, I am perfect in respect of you, and I know not my soule, and I abhorre my life, namely in respect of mine owne vprightnes. And the other place is thus to be translated, *I feare all my sorrowes*, and not all my works: for this is flat against the Hebrue text, and Popish translators themselues follow it not.

Obiect. 2. Eccles. c. 9. *Man knowes not whether he be worthy of loue or hatred. For al things are kept vncerten till the time to come. Answer.* First I say, the translation is not right: the words are thus in the Hebrue and in the Seventie. *No man knoweth loue or hatred, all things are before them.* As for these words [*all things are kept vncerten till the time to come*] are thrust into the

text

text by head and shoulders: and Hierome hath them not. Secondly I answer, that the H. Ghost doth not denie simply the knowledge of Gods loue or hatred, as though there could be no certen assurance of it in this life. If we vnderstand the words thus, then the argument of the holy Ghost must be framed on this manner. If loue or hatred were to be knowne, then it must be knowne by the outward blessings of God: but it cannot be knowne by the outward blessings of God, for all things come alike to all: therefore loue and hatred cannot be knowne. The propositiō is false. For loue may be known other waies then by outward benefits: and therefore the reason is not meete to be ascribed to the spirit of truth. Wherefore the true and proper sense of the words is, that loue or hatred cannot be iudged or discerned by outward blessings of God. S. Bernard speaks of this text on this manner, that no man knowes loue or hatred, namely by himselfe: yet that God giues most certen testimonies thereof to men vpon earth. And serm. 5. *de Dedic.* his words are these. *Who knowes if he be worthie loue or hatred? who knowes the minde of the Lord? Here both faith & truth must needs helpe vs, that that which is hidden in the heart of the father may be reuealed vnto vs by the spirit: and his spirit giuing testimonie per suuades*

Bernard. serm. 1. de ascen. pasc.

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our spirit, that we are the sonnes of God: and this perswasion is caused by his calling and iustifying vs freely by faith. And S. Hierome (though comonly abused to the contrarie) saith no more but that men cannot know loue or hatred by the present afflictions which they suffer, because they know not whether they suffer them for triall or for punishment. Hierome on this place.

Obiect. 3. 1. Cor. 4. *I iudge not my selfe, I know nothing by my selfe.* Here Paul as not being privie to his own estate, refuseth to giue any iudgement of his owne righteousnes. *Answ.* It is manifest by the words of this epistle, that certaine in Corinth, boldly more then wisely, censured the Apostles ministerie, and withall disgraced it in respect of the ministery of other teachers. Therfore Paul in this chapter goes about to make an Apologie for himselfe, speaking nothing of his owne person and the estate thereof before God, but onely of his ministerie and the excellencie thereof. And this is the iudgement of Theodoret, Aquinas, and Lira vpon this text. And when he saith, *I iudge not my selfe*, his meaning is, I take not vpon me to iudge of what value and price my ministerie is before God, in respect of the ministerie of this or that man: but I leaue all to God. Here then Paul refuseth onely to giue iudgement of the excellencie of his

his owne ministerie, and in other cases he refused not to iudge himselfe, as when he said, *I haue fought a good fight, I haue kept the faith, henceforth is laid vp for me the crowne of righteousnes which the Lord the righteous iudge shall giue me*, 2. Tim. 4. 8. And Chrysostome on this place saith, that Paul refused to iudge himselfe not simply, but onely for this ende, that he might restraine others and teach them modestie. And where Paul saith, *I know nothing by my selfe*, the speach is not generall, but must be vnderstoode of negligences and offences in the compasse of his ministery. For he was priuie to himselfe that in simplicitie and godly purenes, he had his conuersation in the world, 2. Cor. 1. 12. and he knew this by himselfe, that nothing should seuer him from the loue of God in Christ. Rom. 8. 38.

Obiect. 4. That we may be iustified there is somewhat required of vs, namely faith and repentance: and where these are wanting a man cannot be iustified. Now no man can be certen by the certentie of faith, that he repents of his sinnes with all his heart, and that he hath such a faith, as God requires at our hands, considering there is no testimonie in the word of our faith and repentance in particular. Therefore no man can be certen by certentie of faith, that his sinnes are pardoned. *Answer*. It is not necessarie that

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any man should be certen by faith of his faith and repentance; because faith is onely of such things as are absent, where faith and repentance are truly present in all that truly beleeue and repent, it shall be sufficient if a man may any way be vnfallibly certen that he hath them. And though some men falsly perswade themselues that they beleeue, yet he that hath true faith indeede knowes that he hath true faith, euen as certenly as he that vnderstands knowes that he vnderstands. Paul saith to the Corinthians, *Proue your selues whether ye be in the faith or no*, 2. Cor. 13. 5. hereby giuing them to vnderstand that all which beleeue, haue the spirit of discerning to know certenly that they doe beleeue. Againe he saith of himselfe, 2. Tim. 1. 12. *I know whome I haue beleeued.* And Saint Iohn saith, 1. ep. 3. 24. *By this we know that he dwells in vs by the spirit which he hath giuen vs*; making no question of it, but that he which hath the spirit knowes that he hath the same. And testimonies of men are not wanting in this case. *Augustine.* [b] *Euery one seeth faith to be in his owne heart if he beleeue: if not, he seeth it to be vwanting.* Again, [c] *A beleeuer seeth his owne faith, by which he answereth that he beleeueth without doubt.* And, [d] *He which loueth his brother, more knoweth the loue whereby he loueth, then his brother*

[b] *August. l. de Trin. 13. c. 1.*

[c] *epist. 112.*

[d] *lib. 8. de Trin. c. 8.*

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whome he loueth. Againe whereas it is said that hauing faith, yet we know not whether it be sufficient or no; I answear that faith beeing without hypocrisie, is sufficient to saluation though it be imperfect. God more respects the trueth of our faith, then the perfection thereof. And as the hand of the child or of the palsie man though it be feeble, is able to reach out it selfe and receiue an almes of a prince; so the faith that is but weake, is able to apprehend and receiue Christ with all his benefits.

Obiect. 5. Prov. 28. *Blessed is the man that feareth alwayes.* Phil. 2. *Worke your salvation with feare and trembling. Answer.* There is a threefold feare, one of *nature*, the secōd of *grace*, the third of *distrust*. Feare of nature is that whereby the nature of man is troubled with any thing that is hurtfull vnto it, and therefore auoideth it. Feare of grace, is that excellent gift which is called the *beginning of wisdome*, and it is a certaine awe or reuerence vnto God, in whose presence we doe whatsoeuer we doe. Feare of distrust is, when men tremble at the iudgemēts of God for their sinnes, because they haue no hope of mercie. Of these three, the first was good by creation, and therfore it was in our Sauiour Christ, but since the fall it is defective. The third is a vice called slauish feare. And the

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second is that which is commaunded in these and the like places of Scripture; the intent whereof is to make vs circumspect and feare-full, least we should offend God by any sinne, our owne weaknesse considered, and the *invincible* iudgements of God. And this kinde of feare, as also the first, may stande with certentie of faith. Rom. 11. *Thou standest by faith, be not high minded but feare.* Psal. 2. *Serue the Lord in feare, and reioyce in trembling.*

Object. 6. Where there is no word, there is no faith. For faith and the word of God be relatiues. But there is no word of God that saith to particular men, Cornelius, or Peter, or Iohn, thy sinnes are pardoned, excepting a few persons, as Marie Magdalen, and the palsie man, &c. Therefore there is no particular faith. *Answ.* Though there be no word set downe in Scripture touching the saluation of this or that particular man, yet there is set downe that which is equivalent to a particular word, and as much in effect. For the promise of remission of sinnes and life euerlasting, is giuen with a commaundement that euery man * applie the promise to himselfe, as I haue before prooued: and this is altogether as much as if euery mans particular name had beene put in the promise.

* Reade Bernard. ser. 2. de Annun.

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I adde further that the promises of the Gospel must be considered two waies, first as they are generally set downe in Scripture without application to any person: secondly as they are taught and published in the ministerie of the word, the end whereof is to applie them to the persons of men, partly by preaching and partly by administring the sacraments of baptisme and the Lords supper, which are seales of righteousnes of faith. Now the promise applied and (as I may say) particularized to the members of the Church, is by the vertue of Gods ordinance as much as if God himselfe had given the promise particularly and annexed mens names vnto it. It is further answered that the promise of remission of sinne, is preached not simply but vpon condition of mens faith & repentance, which cannot be certenly knowne. I answer againe (as I have already proued) that he which truly beleeueth and repenteth, knoweth that he doth certenly beleeue and repent.

Object. 7. To beleeue the pardon of a mans owne sinnes, is none of the articles of faith, propounded in any Creede either of the Apostles, or the Nicene fathers, or Athanasius, or any other Creede. *Answer.* This faith is contained vnder these words, *I beleeue remission of sinnes*: and I prooue it thus. These words are an article of

of Chriſtian faith, and therefore they muſt in ſenſe containe more then the deuill doth or can beleeue: nowe the deuill beleeueth thus much, that God giues remiſsiõ of ſinnes to his Church: Chriſtian men therefore muſt goe one ſteppe further, and beleeue particularly the remiſsion of their owne ſinnes. Otherwiſe if the Papiſts will haue the Catholicke faith to beleeue no more in this point, then the damned ſpirits beleeue, let them take it to themſelues. But they replie further, that if there were any ſuch article of faith, then ſome perſons muſt beleeue, that they are iuſt though they willingly commit mortall ſinne, which is an euident falſhood. *Anſwer.* He that beleeues the pardon of his owne ſinnes by true faith, hath the ſpirit of God in him, and a conſtant purpoſe not to ſinne againſt God: and therefore if he ſinne, it is againſt his purpoſe, and without any full conſent of wil: and it is not he that doeth it, but the ſinne that dwelleth in him. But if it ſo fall out, that the child of God be ouertaken with any actual ſinne, then his caſe ſtandeth thus. He hath by his fall wounded his conſcience, weakned his faith, bereaued himſelfe of Gods fauour as much as in him lieth, made himſelfe guiltie of a ſinne and worthie of damnation: and God for his part accordingly turnes the woonted ſignes of his fauour in-

to signes of anger and displeasure: and the sinne though it be pardoned in the purpose of God, yet is it not actually pardoned, till the partie repent. Things standing thus, we teach not that men must beleeue the pardon of their sinnes while they liue and lie in them; for that were flatly to teach falshoode for truth: but our doctrine is, that such persons must first of all humble themselues, and say with the prodigall childe, that they haue sinned against God, and are not worthie to be called his children any more: and againe renew their decaied faith and repentance, that they may beleeue (as before) their perfect reconciliation with God.

Obiect. 8. In respect of God, who is truth it selfe, we are to beleeue the promise in particular: yet if we respect our owne vnworthines and indisposition, we are to feare and in some part to doubt. For the promise of remission of sinnes is not absolute, but depends vpon the condition of our workes. Therefore our certentie is onely coniecturall. *Answer.* I answer first that in respect of our owne vnworthines, we are not to doubt of our saluation, but to be out of all doubt, yea to dispaire before the iudgement seate of God. For they which are of the workes of the lawe, are vnder the curse, Gal. 3. 10. and

Paul

Paul ſaith of his owne workes of grace, *in this am I not iuſtified*, 1. Cor. 4. 4. And Dauid being out of all doubt of his owne deſerued damnation in regard of his owne vnworthines ſaith freely, *Enter not into iudgement with thy ſeruant, O Lord, for no flesh ſhall be iuſtified in thy ſight*. Againe the conſideration of any vnworthines in our ſelues, doth not hinder a reſolution concerning Gods mercy in Chriſt. For true faith makes an entrance vnto God *vvith boldnes*, (I ſay with boldnes) euen for thoſe perſons that are vnworthy in themſelues, Eph. 4. 12. And Abraham (whoſe faith is to be followed of vs) did not vpon the conſideration of his olde decaied bodie, reſt himſelfe with bare hope vpon alikelihood of the accompliſhment of Gods promiſe, but he *beleeued vnder hope euen againſt hope*, Rom. 4. 18. Laſtly I anſwear that the ground of the former obiection is erronious, namely that the promiſe of ſaluation depends on the condition of our workes: becauſe the Scripture ſaith, it is made and accompliſhed on mans part freely. I graunt indeede that to the promiſe there is annexed a condition of faith: yet faith here muſt not be conſidered as a worke, but as an inſtrument apprehending Chriſt with his benefits: and withall repentance with the fruits thereof are on our part required,

yet no otherwise but as they are necessarie consequents of faith, and the signes and documents thereof.

Obiect. 9. No man knowes all his sinnes: no man therefore can certenly know that all his sinnes are pardoned, and that he is accepted of God. *Answer.* The ground of this argument is false: namely that a man cannot be assured of the pardon of his sinnes, if some of them be vnknowne. And to make this manifest, I will lay downe a more certen ground, which shal be this. As the case is in Repentance, so it is also in faith: but there may be true and sufficient repentance of vnknowne sinnes. God indeede requires a particular repentance for particular knowne sinnes; but if they be hidden and vnknowne, he accepts a generall repentance: an example wherof we haue in Dauid, *Who knows*, saith he, *the errours of this life? then purge me from my secret sinnes.* If this were not so, neither Dauid nor any man els could be saued. For when Dauid repented greatly of his murder and adulterie, yet we find not that he repented particularly of his polygamie: which, in all likelihoode, through the swinge and custome of those times was not thē reputed to be any sinne; specially in the person of a king: and yet because (as we know) he is saued, this very sinne is pardoned. Therefore when

when God pardons the knowne sinnes of men, whereof they repent, he doth withall pardon the rest that are vnknowne. And by this it appeares that the ignorance of some hidden sinnes, after a man with diligence hath searched himselfe, cannot preiudice an vnfallible assurance of the pardon of them all and of his owne saluation.

Obiect. 10. We pray for the pardon of our owne sinnes, and therefore we are vncerten of pardon: the mã which knows that he hath pardon, need not pray for it. I *answer* first, when we are taught by Christ to pray for the forgiuenes of our debts, we are put in mind not to seek the pardon of al our sinnes, whether past or present but specially of our present and daily offences whereby we make our selues day by day guilty, till such time as we humble our selues and repent of them. Secondly by this petition we are taught to aske the increase of our assurance; because though God bestow endles mercie on vs, yet we are skant in receiuing of it: our hearts beeing like a narrow necked vessell, which being cast euen into the Ocean sea, receiueth in water onely droppe by droppe.

Obiect. 11. No man can beleeue his owne saluation, as he beleeues the articles of faith: therefore no man can beleeue the pardon of

his sinnes and his saluation by an infallible certentie. I *answer*, first that euery one that lookes for saluation by Christ, is bound in conscience as certenly to beleeue his owne saluation and adoption by Christ, as he beleeues the articles of faith; because to the promise of life there is annexed a commandement to beleeue and applie it. Secondly, this faith whereby we are to beleeue our owne saluation, if we respect the true and proper nature thereof, is as certen as that faith whereby we beleeue the articles of faith. Thirdly, as there be diuers ages in the life of mã, so there be diuers degrees and measures of true faith. There is first of all a beginning or rudiment of faith, like the *smoking flaxe* and *bruised reede*, which Christ will neither quench nor bruise. Againe there is *weake faith*, which beleeueth the promise truly, but yet is perplexed with many doubtings. Lastly, there is *strong faith*, which hath ouercome all doubtings, and is not onely for nature certen, but also a large & plentifully perswasiõ of Gods mercy in Christ. Exãples of this we haue in Abrahã, Dauid, the martyrs, & such like worthie mẽ. Now by the secõd faith, men do as *certenly* beleeue their adoption as the articles, but not so *firmely* & fully. But by the last, remission of sinnes is not only as certenly but also as fully beleeued as any article of faith.

Obiect. 12.

Object. 12. Ancient fathers the lights of Gods Church, haue alwaies condemned this vnfallible & speciall certentie of faith, which the Protestants hold and maintaine. *Answ.* Though we build not the doctrine of our religion vpon the iudgements of men, yet we refuse not in this & other points to be tried by the fathers, whose writings well vnderstoode, make more for vs, then for the Popish religion. And their testimonies commonly alledged to confute the certentie of speciall faith, are much abused. I. Many of them serue to prooue, that a man cãnot iudge & discerne of euery particular motion & grace of his heart, of the increase of these graces, and the contrarie decrease: of speciall vices and wants, many whereof are hidden from the vnderstanding. Theodoret in his comment. 1. Cor. c. 4. *I will not* (saith he) *free my selfe from sinne, but wait the sentence of God: for it often fals out that men sinne of ignorance, and thinke that to be equal and iust which the God of all sees to be otherwise.* August. de verbis dei. serm. 23. *Peraduẽture thou finds nothing in thy conscience: but he finds something that seeth better.* And vpon Psal. 41. *I knowe that the iustice of my God shall abide, but whether mine shall or no I knowe not: for the saying of the Apostle terrifieth me, He which thinks he stands, let him take heede*

Theodoret on Corinth.

August. de verbis dei serm. 23.

least he fall. Here he speakes of his inward righteousnes, and that as it is considered in it selfe without the assistance of God. For he addes afterward, *Therefore because there is no stability in me for my selfe, nor hope in me for my self, hereupon my soule is troubled for my selfe.* Chrysost. homil. 87. on Iohn. *I am grieued least peradventure supposing my selfe to loue, doe not loue as before: when I seemed constant and courageous vnto my selfe, I was found but a dastard.* These & a thousand like testimonies proue nothing. For though a man cannot fully discern his heart, either in respect of his own sinns, or in respect of euery grace, yet this hinders not but that he may haue an infallible certentie of his saluation, and also a sufficient gift to discerne his owne faith and repentance. II. Other places must be vnderstood of proud presumption, & of a kinde of securitie, in which men dreame of ease and libertie without trouble or temptation. August. de correp. & grat. c. 13. *Who of all the companie of the faithfull as long as he liues in this mortall condition, can presume that he is of the number of the predestinate?* And, De bono persev. c. 22. *No man can be secure touching euerlastall life, till this life be ended.* Bernard. epist. 107. *Hauing nowe receiued the knowledge of him selfe in part, he may reioyce in hope, but not in security as yet.*

Chrysost. homil. 87. in Iohn.

August. de Correp. & Grat. c. 13.

yet. Hieron. Dan. 4. *Let no man holdly promise to another the pardon of his sinnes*. III. Some places auouch that a man can not be sure of perseuerance to the end without falls and decayes in grace: all which we graunt. August. *de civit. dei. li*. 11. *c*. 12. *Although the saints be* * *certen of the reward of their perseverance, yet they are founde to be vncerten of the perseverance it selfe: for vvhat man can knowe that hee shall persevere in the practise and increase of righteousnesse vnto the end, except he be assured of it by some revelation*. IV. Some places must be understoode of experimentall certenty, when the euent is accomplished. Hieronym. booke 2. against Pelagians. *Call no man blessed before his ende, for as long as vvee live here vve are in the fight, and as long as vvee are in the fight vve have no certen victory*. V. Some places speakes of the uncertenty of other mens saluation, which we graunt. The authour of the booke *de voca. Gentium*. 1. *clas*. saith, *we can pronounce of no man before his end that hee shall be in the glory of the elect*. *August. lib. de Per sever*. *c*. 13. *Men are not vvith any certen asseveration to auouch that others belong to this calling*. VI. Some speake of that certenie which comes by reuelation without the worde. *Greg. lib*. 6 *epist*. 12. to Gregoria.

* marke it well.

goria, *Whereas you adde in your epistles that you will be earnest with me till I write, that it hath bene made known unto me that your sinnes are forgiven: you haue required a hard and unprofitable thing. Hard, because I am unworthy to vvhome a revelation should be made: Vnprofitable, because you must not be made secure touching your sinnes vnlesse it be in the last day of your life, for then you should not be able to bewaile the same sinnes.* VII. Some places denie unto man that certentie which is proper to God, which is, to discerne in himselfe all things to come plainly, as they shal come to passe without helpe of testimonies and outward signes. Bernard. serm. 1. de Septuages. *Who can say, I am of the elect: I am of the predestinate to life? certenly we haue none as yet but the assiance of our hope comforteth vs.* Conferre these wordes with those that follow. *For this cause certaine signes and manifest tokens of salvation are given, that it may be a thing out of doubt that he is in the number of the elect in vvhome these signes are.*

Thus I haue in some part made manifest that an unfallible certenty of pardon of sinne and life euerlasting is the property of euery renued conscience. Now therefore I will proceede further to consider how this certenty is caused and imprinted

printed in the conscience. The principall agent and beginner thereof is the Holy ghost, inlightning the minde and conscience with spirituall and diuine light: and the instrument in this action is the ministery of the gospell wherby the worde of life is applyed in the name of God to the person of euery hearer. And this certentie is by little and little conceiued in a forme of reasoning or practicall syllogisme framed in the mind by the holy ghost on this manner.

Euery one that beleeues, is the child of God:
But I doe beleeve,
Therefore I am the child of God.

The proposition is made by the minister of the worde in the publike congregation: and it is nothing else but the promise of eternall life applyed to the particular hearer. The second part or the assumption is the voice of conscience regenerate or the voice of Gods spirite in the same. Now Papistes write and auouch that the assumption is false: but the reasons which they vse to prooue the same, are of small moment. First they alledge, that many are deceiued in their perswasions, thinking they haue that which they haue not: I answere againe that many doe falsely presume of Gods mercy, and imagine they haue that faith which they haue not; and in all such the assumption

is false: yet in all them that are chosen to saluation and truely called, it is vnfallibly true. For such as haue receiued the gift of true faith, haue also another gift of discerning whereby they see and know their owne faith. It is further obiected that Ieremy saieth, 17. 9. *The heart is deceitfull and vvicked above all things, vvho can knowe it?* But the intent of this place is onely to shew, that no man can search his heart to the very bottome, to see all and euery want, infirmitie, and wicked inclination that is therein. For originall sinne wherewith the heart of man is tainted, is a pronenesse or disposition to all the sinnes that are or may be. And though men can not discerne all their sinnes, yet many of them are certenly knowen: why may not then many of the graces of God be certenly known, specially those which be of the principall, as faith, sanctification, repentance. Againe it is alledged, that Peter beleeued that he was able to lay downe his life for Christs sake, and yet indeede was not as the euent declared, for when the time came he denyed Christ. *Answ.* Peter at this time was but weake in faith, and hee was much carried away with a confidence of his owne strength, which made him speake these wordes of presumption: and though he failed in this one particular action, yet failed hee

not

not in the principall, that is, in the perswasion of the pardon of his owne sinnes and of life euerlasting. In a word, it is certen that many perswade them-selues of Gods mercy, and yet are deceiued: neuertheleſſe all ſuch as doe truly beleeue are not deceiued. The holy ghoſt making them to ſee that in themſelues which by nature they can not diſcerne, as Paul ſignified, when he ſaid, I ſpeake the truth, I lie not, my conſcience bearing me witneſſe *by the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. 9.v.1.

Againe the ſame teſtimony is giuen otherwiſe thus,

Euery childe of God hath the pardon of his ſinnes, ſaith Gods word.

But I am Gods child: and therefore haue the pardon of my ſinnes, ſaith the renewed conſcience by the direction of Gods ſpirit. Rom.8. 16. Gal. 4.6.

After that this teſtimony is once begun, it is confirmed by the ſame meanes, as alſo by prayer and the ſacraments. Now it may be demanded how a bodily element, as bread, wine, water, ſhould be able to confirme a perſwaſion of our adoption that is in the conſcience. *Anſw.* The element in the ſacrament is an outwarde ſeale or inſtrument to confirme faith not as a medicine reſtores and confirmes health, whether

ther we thinke on it or not, whether we sleepe or wake, and that by his owne inherent vertues, but by reasoning in syllogisme made by the good conscience: the [b] *medium* thereof beeing the outwarde signe in the sacrament. By means of which syllogisme the Holy Ghost mooues and stirres the mind, yea cherisheth and increaseth faith, on this manner.

[b] reason.

Hee which vseth the elements aright shall receiue the promises:
But I do, or I haue vsed the elements aright.
Therefore I shall receiue the promises.

Whereas presumption and the illusion of Satan will as well tell a man that he is the childe of God, as the true testimony of regenerate conscience, the way to put difference betwene them is this. I. Presumption is naturall and from the very wombe, but this testimony of conscience is supernaturall. II. Presumption is in them that make no account of the ordinarie meanes of saluation. This testimony comes by the reuerent and carefull hearing of Gods worde. III. Presumption is in them that vse not to call on the name of God: but this testimony of conscience is ioyned with the spirite of adoption which is the spirite of prayer. IV. Presumption is ioyned with loosenesse of life, this testimony brings with it alwayes an happy

happy change and alteration. For hee which hath a good conscience, hath also care to keepe good conscience in all things. V. Presumption is without doubting: wheras the testimony of conscience is mingled with manifold doubtings. Mar. 9.24. Luc. 17.5. yea otherwhiles ouercharged with them. Psal. 77.7,8. VI. Presumption will giue a man the slippe in the time of sicknesse and in the houre of death, and the testimony of good conscience stickes by him to the end, and euen makes him say, *Lorde remember now how I haue vvalked before thee in truth, and haue done that which is acceptable in thy sight*. Isai. 38.1.

§ 3. Of the duties of regenerate conscience.

The duties of conscience regenerate are two: in special maner to giue testimony, & to excuse.

The speciall thing of which conscience gives testimony is, that wee are the children of God predestinate to life euerlasting. And that appeares by these reasons. I. Rom. 8.16. The spirit of God witnesseth togither *with our spirit* that wee are the sonnes of God. Now the spirit of man here mentioned is the mind or conscience renued & sanctified. To this purpose saith Iohn. *He that beleeueth hath a witnes in him selfe*. 1. Iob. 5.10. II. That which gods spirit doth testify to the conscience, the cõscience can again testifie to vs: but Gods spirit doth testify to the cõscience

of

of a man regenerate that he is the child of God. 1. Cor.2.12. Therefore the conscience also doth the same. III. Hee which is iustified hath peace of conscience, Rom.5.v.1. Now there can be no peace in conscience, till it tell the man which is iustified that he is indeed iustified. IV. That which the conscience may know certenly, it may testifie: but conscience may know certenly without revelation, the mans election, and adoption, as I haue before prooued: therefore it is able to giue testimony of these.

Againe, the regenerate conscience giueth testimony of a certaine kinde of righteousnesse being an unseperable companion thereof: and for this cause it is called of some *the righteousnesse of a good conscience*. Now this righteousnesse is nothing els but unfained, earnest, and constant purpose with endeauour answerable therto not to sinne in any thing, but in all things whatsoeuer to please God and doe his wil. Heb. 13.18. *Pray for vs: for vvee are assured that vve haue good conscience* in all thinges *desiring to liue honestly*. 2. Cor.1.12. *Our reioycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicitie and godly pureness, and not in fleshly wisdome vvee haue had our conversation in the worlde.* 1. Cor.4.4. *I know nothing by my selfe*. Isai. 38. 2. *Lord remember now how I haue walked before*

thee

thee with an vpright heart, and haue done that which is acceptable in thy sight.

I adde this clause, *in all things*, because that obedience which is the signe or fruite of good conscience of which also it giues testimonie is generall, shewing it selfe in all and euery commandement of God. Philosophers haue saide that Iustice is universall, because he which hath it hath all vertues. But it is more truely saide of this christiã righteousnes or *new obedience*, that it is vniuersall, and that he which can performe true obedience in one commandement can doe the same in all. Actes 23. 1. Men and brethren I haue *in all good conscience* serued God till this day. Psal. 119. 6. Then shall I not be confounded when I shall haue respect *to all thy commaundements*. Act. 24. 16. *In the meane season I endeauour my selfe, or, take paines to haue a conscience without offence towards God and towardes men.*

This shewes that there is a great number of men professing the Gospell that want good conscience. For though they shewe themselues very forwarde and willing to obey God in many things, yet in some one thing or other they will follow the swinge of their owne wills. Many are diligent to frequẽt the place of gods worship, to heare the word preached with liking, to receiue the sacraments at times appointed, & to

approoue of any good thing, all this is very commendable, yet these men often when they depart home from the congregation, say in effect on this manner, Religion stay thou here at the Church dore till the next Sabbath. For if we looke into their priuate conuersations, the gouernment of their families, or their dealings in their particular callings, we shall with greefe see much disorder and litle conscience. It is a common practise of sick men when they make their willes on their death beds, in the very first place to commend their bodies to the graue, and their soules to God that gaue them in hope of a better resurrection; and all this is well done: but afterward they bequeath their goods gotten by fraud, oppression, and forged cauillation to their owne friends & children without making any recompence or satisfaction. But alas this should not be so: for obedience that goes with good conscience must be performed to all gods commandements without exception: and if if it be done but to some alone, it is but counterfeit obediēce: & he that is guilty in one is guilty in all.

As regenerate conscience giues testimony of our new obedience: so it doeth also by certaine sweet motiōs stirr men forward to perform the same. Psal. 16. 7. *my reines* [that is, the mind and conscience inlightned by the spirit of god] *teach me*

me in the night season. Isai. 30.22. *And thine eares shall heare a word behinde thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it when thou turnest to the right hand, & whē thou turnest to the left.* Now this word is not only the voice of pastors & teachers in the open ministery, but also the voice of renued conscience inwardly by many secret cogitations sibbing them that are about to sinne. A christian mā is not only a priest & a prophet, but also a spiritual king euen in this life: and the Lord in mercy hath vouchsafed him this honor that his conscience renuēd within him shall be his solliciter to put him in mind of all his affaires and duties which hee is to performe to God: yea it is the controller to see all things kept in order in the heart which is the temple and habitation of the holy ghost.

The second office of conscience regenerate is to *excuse*, that is, to cleare & defend a man euen before God against all his enemies both bodily and ghostly. Psal. 7.8. *Iudge thou me, O Lord, according to my righteousnes, & according to mine innocencie in me.* Again 26.1,2. *Iudge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine innocencie, &c. Prouue me, O Lord, and trie me: examine my reines and my heart.* That the conscience can do this, it specially appeares in the conflict & combat made by it against the deuill on this maner.

The deuill begins and disputes thus. Thou, O wretched man art a most grieuous sinner: therefore thou art but a damned wretch. The conscience answereth and saith, I know that Christ hath made a satisfaction for my sinnes, and freed me from damnation. The deuill replyeth againe thus: Though Christ haue freed thee from death by his death: yet thou art quite barred from heauen because thou neuer diddest fulfill the lawe. The conscience answereth, I knowe that Christ is my righteousnesse and hath fulfilled the lawe for me. Thirdly the deuill replies and saith, Christs benefites belong not to thee, thou art but an hypocrite and wanteſt faith. Now when a man is driuen to this straight, it is neither wit, nor learning, nor fauour, nor honour that can repulse this temptation, but onely the poore conscience directed and sanctified by the spirit of God which boldly and constantly answereth, *I know that I beleeue.*

And though it be the office of conscience after it is once reuiued principally to excuse, yet doth it also in part accuse. When Dauid had nũbred the people *his heart smote* him. 2 Sam. 24. 10. Iob saith in his affliction that *God did write bitter things against him & made him possesse the sinnes of his youth.* Iob. 13. 26. The reason hereof is, because the whole man and the very conscience

ence is onely in part regenerate, and therefore in some part remaines still corrupt.

Neither must it seeme strange that one and the same conscience should both accuse and excuse: because it doth it not in one and the same respect. It excuseth, in that it assureth a man that his person standes righteous before God, and that he hath an indeauour in the generall course of his life to please God: it accuseth him for his particular slippes, and for the wants that be in his good actions.

If any shall demaund why God doth not perfectly regenerate the conscience and cause it only to excuse, the answere is this. God doth it for the preventing of greater mischiefes. When the Israelites came into the land of Canaan, the Cananites were not at the first wholly displaced. Why? Moses rendreth the reason; least wilde beasts come and inhabite some parts of the land that were dispeopled and more annoy them then the Cananites. In like maner God reuues the conscience, but so as it shall still accuse when occasion serueth for the preuenting of many dangerous sinnes which like wild beastes would make hauock of the soule. Exod. 23. 29.

Thus much of good conscience: Now followes euill conscience: and it is so called partly because it is defiled and corrupted by originall sinne, § 4. Of euill conscience.

sinne, and partly because it is euill that is troublesome & painfull in our sense & feeling, as all sorrows, calamities, & miseries are, which for this very cause also are called *euils*. And though cõscience be thus termed euil, yet hath it some respects of generall goodnes in us much as it is an instrument of the execution of diuine iustice: because it seemes to accuse them before God, which are iustly to be accused.

It hath spred it selfe ouer mankind as generally as originall sinne: & therfore it is to be found in all men that come of Adam by ordinary generation. The property of it is, with all the power it hath to accuse & condemne, & therby to make a man afraid of the presence of God, & to cause him to flie frõ God as from an enemy. This the Lord signified when he said to Adã, *Adã where art thou?* When Peter saw some litle glimbring of the power and maiesty of God in the great draught of fish, he fell on his knees and saide to Christ, *Lord goe from me for I am a sinfull man.*

Luk. 5. 8.

Euill conscience is either *deade* or *stirring*.

Dead conscience.

Dead conscience is that, which though it can do nothing but accuse, yet commonly it lyes quiet, accusing litle or nothing at all.

The causes why conscience lyeth dead in all men, either more or lesse, are many. I. Defect of reason or understanding in crased braines. II. Violence and strength of affections, which as a

cloud do ouercast the mind, & as a gulfe of water swallow up the iudgement and reason: and therby hinder the conscience from accusing: for when reason can not doe his part, then conscience doth nothing. For exãple: some one in his rage behaues himselfe like a mad man, and willingly commits any mischiefe without controlment of conscience: but when choller is down, he begins to be ashamed and troubled in himselfe, not alwaies by grace, but euen by the force of his naturall conscience, which when affection is calmed begins to stirre, as appeareth in the example of Cain. III. Ignorance of Gods will & errors in iudgement cause the conscience to be quiet, when it ought to accuse. This we find by experience in the deaths of obstinate heretikes, which suffer for their damnable opinions without checke of conscience.

Dead conscience hath two degrees. The first is the slumbring or the benummed conscience: the second is the seared conscience.

The *benummed* conscience is that which doth not accuse a man for any sinne vnlesse it be grieuous or capitall; & not alwaies for that but only in the time of some grievous sickenesse or calamity. Iosephs brethren were not much troubled in conscience for their villany in selling their brother, till afterwarde when they were afflicted with famine and distressed in Egypt. Conscience benũmed.

Genes. 42. 2. This is the conscience that commonly raignes in the hearts of drousie protestants, of all carnall and lukewarme gospellers, and of such as are commonly tearmed ciuill honest men, whose apparent integritie will not free them from guiltie consciences.

Such a conscience is to be taken heede of as being most dangerous. It is like a wilde beast, which so long as hee lyes a sleepe seemes very tame and gentle, and hurtes no man: but when he is rowzed, he then awakes and flies in a mans face, and offers to pull out his throate. And so it is the manner of dead conscience to lye still and quiet euen through the course of a mans life: and hereupon a man would thinke (as most do) that it were a good conscience indeed: but whē sicknesse or death approcheth, it beeing awaked by the hande of God, beginnes to stande up on his legges, and shewes his fierce eyes and offers to rende out euen the very throate of the soule. And heathen poets knowing this right well, haue compared euill conscience to Furies pursuing men with firebrands.

Seared conscience.

The *seared conscience* is that which doeth not accuse for any sinne; no not for great sinnes. It is compared by Paul, 1. Tim. 4. v. 2. to the parte of a mans body which is not onely bereft of sense, life, & motion by the gangrene, but also

is

is burnt with a searing yron: and therefore must needes be vtterly past all feeling.

This kind of conscience is not in al men, but in such persons as are become obstinate heretikes and notorious malefactours. And it is not in thē by nature, but by an increase of the corruption of nature; and that by certaine steppes and degrees. For naturally euery man hath in him blindnes of minde, and obstinacie or frowardnes of heart; yet so, as with the blindnes and ignorance of minde, are ioyned some remnants of the light of nature, shewing vs what is good and euill. Now the heart of man beeing exceedingly obstinate and peruerse, carrieth him to commit sinnes euen against the light of nature and common conscience: by practise of such sinnes the light of nature is extinguished: and then commeth the *reprobate minde*, which iudgeth euill good, and good euill: after this follows the *seared conscience*, in which there is no feeling or remorse: and after this comes an *exceeding greedines* to all manner of sinne. Eph. 4.18. Rom.1.28.

Here it may be demaunded, how mens consciences shall accuse them in the day of iudgement, if they be thus benummed and seared in this life. *Answer*. It is said, Rev.20.12. that at the last iudgement all shall be brought before Christ,

Christ, and that the bookes then shall be opened: among these bookes, no doubt, conscience is one. Wherefore though a dead conscience in this life be as a closed or sealed booke; because it doeth either little or nothing accuse, yet after this life, it shall be as a booke laide open: because God shall inlighten it, and so stirre it vp by his mightie power, that it shall be able to reueale and discouer all the sinnes that a man euer committed.

Stirring conscience.

Stirring conscience, is that which doth sensibly either accuse or excuse. And it hath foure differences.

The first which accuseth a man for doing euill. This must needes be an euill conscience. Because to accuse is not a property that belongs to it by creation, but a defect that followeth after the fall. And if the conscience which truely accuseth a man for his sinnes, were a good conscience, then the worst man that is, might haue a good conscience; which cannot be.

When the accusation of the conscience is more forcible and violent, it is called a *wounded* or *troubled conscience*: which though of it selfe it be not good nor any grace of God; yet by the goodnes of God it seruetb often to be an occasion or preparation to grace; as a needle, that drawes the threede into the cloath, is some

meanes

meanes whereby the cloath is sowed together.

The second, is that which accuseth for doing well. And it is to be found in them that are giuen to idolatrie and superstition. As in the Church of Rome: in which, because mens consciences are insnared and intangled with humane traditions, many are troubled for doing that which is good in it selfe, or at the least a thing indifferent. As for example: let a priest omit to say masse &c to say his canonicall houres, his conscience will accuse him therfore: though the omitting of the canonicall houres and the idolatrous masse, be indeede by Gods word no sinne.

The third, is the conscience which excuseth for doing that which is euill. This also is to be found in them that are giuen to idolatrie and superstition. And there is a particular example hereof, Ioh. 16.2. *Yea, the time shall come that whosoeuer killeth you, will thinke that he doth God good seruice*. Such is the conscience of Popish traytours in these daies, that are neuer touched at all, though they intend and enterprise horrible villanies, and be put to death therefore.

The fourth, is that which excuseth for well doing, at some times, and in some particular actions of carnall men. When Abimelech had

had taken Sarai from Abraham, God saide vnto him in a dreame, *I knowv that thou didaest this with an vpright minde*, Gen. 20. 6. This may be tearmed * good conscience, but is indeede otherwise. For though it doe truly excuse in one particular action, yet because the man in whome it is may be vnregenerate and as yet out of Christ, and because it doth accuse in many other matters: therefore it is no good conscience. If all the vertues of naturall men are indeede ᵇ beautifull sinnes, and their righteousnes but a carnall righteousnes; then the conscience also of a carnall man, though it excuse him for well doing, is but a carnall conscience.

* *Moraliter bona sed in non renatis mala.*

ᵇ *Splendida peccata.*

CAP. IV.

Mans dutie touching conscience.

§ 1. Mans first dutie to get good conscience.

Mans dutie concerning conscience is twofold. The first is, if he want good conscience aboue all things to labour to obtaine it: for it is not giuen by nature to any man, but comes by grace.

For

For the obtaining of good conscience, three things must be procured: a preparation to good conscience, the applying of the remedie, the reformation of conscience.

In the preparation, foure things are required. The first is, the knowledge of the lawe, and the particular commaundements thereof, whereby we are taught what is good, what is badde: what may be done, and what may not be done.

The men of our daies, that they may haue the right knowledge of the law, must lay aside many erronious and foolish opinions, which they hold flat against the true meaning of the law of God: otherwise they can never be able to discerne betweene sinne and no sinne. Their especiall and common opinions are these: I. That they can loue God with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themselues; that they feare God aboue all, and trust in him alone; and that they euer did so. II. That to rehearse the Lordes prayer, the beleefe, and 10. commaundements, (without vnderstanding of the words, & without affection) is the true and whole worship of God. III. That a man may seeke to wizzards and soothsayers without offence; because God hath prouided a salue for euery sore. IV. That to sweare by good things and in the way of truth, cannot be a sinne. V. That a man going about

about his ordinarie affaires at home or abroad on the sabbath day, may as well serue God as they which heare all the sermons in the world. VI. That religion and the practise thereof, is nothing but an affected precisenes; that couetousnes the roote of euill, is nothing but worldlines; that pride is nothing but a care of honestie and cleanlines; that single fornication is nothing but the tricke of youth; that swearing and blaspheming argue the couragious mind of a braue gentleman. VII. That a man may doe with his owne what he will, and make as much of it as he can. Hence arise all the frauds and badde practises in trafficke betweene man and man.

The second, is the *knowledge* of the iudiciall sentence of the law, which resolutely pronounceth that a curse is due to man for euery sinne, Gal. 3. 10. Very few are resolued of the truth of this point, and very few doe vnfainedly beleeue it, because mens minds are possessed with a contrarie opinion, that though they sinne against God, yet they shall escape death and damnation. Dauid saith, *The wicked man*, [that is, euery man naturally] *blesseth himselfe*, Psal. 10. 3. & he maketh a league with hell and death, Isai. 28. v. 15. This appeareth also by experience. Let the ministers of the Gospel reprooue sinne, & denounce Gods iudgements against it, according to the

rule

rule of Gods word, yet men will not feare: stones will almost as soone moone in the walls, and the pillers of our Churches, as the flinti hearts of men. And the reason hereof is, because their minds are forestalled with this absurd conceit, that they are not in danger of the wrath of God though they offend. And the opinion of our common people is hereunto answerable; who thinke, that if they haue a good meaning, & doe no man hurt, God will haue them excused both in this life and in the day of iudgement.

The third, is a *iust* and *serious examination* of the conscience by the lawe, that we may see what is our estate before God. And this is a duty vpon which the Prophets stande very much, Lam. 3. 40. *Man suffereth for sinne: let us search and trie our hearts, and turne againe to the Lord.* Zeph. 2. 1. *Fanne your selues, fanne you, O nation, not vworthie to be loued.* In making examination, we must specially take notice of that which doth now lie, or may hereafter lie vpon the conscience. And after due examination hath beene made, a man comes to a knowledge of his sinnes in particular, and of his wretched and miserable estate. When one enters into his house at midnight, he findes or sees nothing out of order: but let him come in the day time when the sunne shineth, and

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he shall then espie many faults in the house, and the very motes that flie vp and downe; so let a man search his heart in the ignorance & blindnes of his minde, he will straightway thinke all is well: but let him once begin to search himselfe with the light and lanterne of the law, and he shall finde many foule corners in his heart and many heapes of sinnes in his life.

The fourth, is *a sorrow* in respect of the punishment of sinne, arising of the three former actiõs. And though this sorrow be no grace; for it befalls as well the wicked, as the godly: yet may it be an occasion of grace, because by the apprehension of Gods anger, we come to the apprehension of his mercie. And it is better that conscience should pricke vs and wound vs and doe his worst against vs in this life while remedie may be had, then after this life, when remedy is past.

Thus much of preparation: now follows the remedie, and the application of it. The remedie is nothing else but the bloode or the merits of Christ, who specially in conscience felt the wrath of God, as when he said, *my soule is heavy vnto death*: and his agonie was not so much a paine and torment in bodie, as the apprehension of the feare and anger of God in conscience: and when the holy Ghost saith, *that he offered vnto*

God

God praiers with ſtrong cries and was heard frõ feare, he directly notes the diſtreſſe and anguiſh of his moſt holy conſcience for our ſinnes. And as the blood of Chriſt is an all-ſufficient remedy, ſo is it alſo the alone remedie of all the ſores and wounds of conſcience. For nothing can ſtanch or ſtay the terrours of conſcience, but the blood of the immaculate lambe of God: nothing can ſatisfie the iudgement of the conſcience, much leſſe the moſt ſeuere iudgement of God; but the onely ſatisfaction of Chriſt. In the application of the remedie, two things are required: the Goſpel preached, and faith: the Goſpell is the hand of God that offereth grace to vs, and faith is our hand whereby we receiue it.

That we indeede by faith receiue Chriſt with all his benefits, we muſt put in practiſe two leſſons. The firſt, is vnfainedly to humble our ſelues before God for all our wants, breaches and wounds in conſcience, which beeing vnto vs as a paradiſe of God, by our default we haue made as it were a little hell within vs. This humiliation is the beginning of all grace and religion: pride and good conſcience can neuer goe together: and ſuch as haue knowledge in religion and many other good gifts without humilitie, are but vnbridled, vnmortified, and vnreformed perſons. This humiliation containes in it

two duties, the first is confession of our sinnes, especially of those that lie vpon our consciences: wherwith must be ioyned the accusing and condemning of our selues: for then we put conscience out of office, & dispatch that labour before our God in this life, which conscience would performe to our eternall damnation after this life. The second dutie is *Deprecation*, which is a kind of praier made with grones and desires of heart, in which we intreat for nothing but for pardon of our sinnes, and that for Christs sake, till such time as the conscience be pacified.

To this humiliation standing on these two parts, excellent promises of grace and life euerlasting are made, Prov. 28.13. *He that hideth his sinnes, shall not prosper: but he that confesseth & forsaketh thē shall find mercy.* 1.Ioh.1.9. *If we acknowledge our sinnes, he is faithfull & iust to forgiue vs our sinnes, & to clense vs frō all vnrighteousnes.* Luk.1.35. *He hath filled the hūgrie with good things, & sent the rich emptie away.* which are also verified by experience in sundrie examples, 2.Sam.12.13. *Dauid said to Nathan, I haue sinned against the Lord. And Nathan saide to Dauid, The Lord also hath put away thy sinne.* 2. Chr. 33.12. *When Manasses was in tribulation, he praied to the Lord his God, and humbled himselfe greatly before the God of his fathers: and*

prayed

prayed vnto him: and God heard his prayer. Luk. 23.43. *And the thiefe ſaid to Ieſus, Lord remember me vvhen thou commeſt to thy kingdome. Then Ieſus ſaide vnto him, Verely I ſay to thee, to day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.* By theſe and many other places it appeares, that when a man doth truly humble himſelfe before God, he is at that inſtant reconciled to God, and hath the pardon of his ſinnes in heauen: & ſhall afterward haue the aſſurance thereof in his own cõſcience.

The ſecond leſſon is, when we are touched in conſcience for our ſinnes, not to yeeld to natural doubtings and diſtruſt; but to reſiſt the ſame, and to indeauour by gods grace to reſolue our ſelues that the promiſes of ſaluation by Chriſt, belong to vs particularly: becauſe to doe thus much, is the very commandement of God.

The third thing is, the reformation of conſcience; which is, when it doth ceaſe to accuſe and terrifie, and begins to excuſe and teſtifie vnto vs by the holy Ghoſt, that we are the children of God, & haue the pardon of our ſinnes. And this it will doe after that men haue ſeriouſly humbled themſelues, and praied earneſtly and conſtantly with ſighes and grones of ſpirit for recõciliation with God in Chriſt. For then the Lord will ſende downe his ſpirit into the conſcience by a ſweete and heauenly teſtimonie to aſſure vs

Good conſcience a fruite of faith.

that we are at peace with God.

Thus we see how good conscience is gotten: and because it is so pretious a iewell, I wish all persons, that as yet neuer laboured to get good conscience, now to beginne. Reasons to induce men thereto may be these: I. You seeke day and night from yere to yere for honours, riches, and pleasures, which ye must leaue behinde you: much more threfore ought you to seeke for renewed and reformed consciences: considering that conscience will be with you in this life, in death, at the last iudgement, and for euer. II. He which wants a conscience purged in the blood of Christ, can neuer haue any true and lasting comfort in this life. Suppose a man araied in cloath of tishue, set in a chaire of estate, before him a table furnished with all daintie prouision: his seruants, Monarches, and Princes: his riches the chiefest treasures & kingdoms of the world: but withall suppose one standing by with a naked sword to cut his throat, or a wild beast readie euer and anon to pull him in pieces: nowe, what can we say of this mans estate, but that all his happines is nothing but woe and miserie? And such is the estate of all men that abounding with riches, honours, and pleasures, carrie about them an euill conscience, which is as a sword to slay the soule, or as a rauenous beast, readie to

sucke

ſucke the blood of the ſoule, and to rend it in pieces. III. He which wants good conſcience can doe nothing but ſinne: his very eating and drinking, his ſleeping and waking, & al he doth, turnes to ſinne: the cõſcience muſt firſt be good before the action can be good: if the roote be corrupt, the fruits are anſwerable. IV. An euill conſcience is the greateſt enemie a man cã haue, becauſe it doth execute all the parts of iudgement againſt him. It is the Lords ſergeant. God neede not ſend out proceſſe by any of his creatures for man: the conſcience within man will arreſt him, and bring him before God. It is the gayler to keepe man in priſon in bolts & irons, that he may be forth-comming at the day of iudgement. It is the witnes to accuſe him, the iudge to condemne him, the hangman to execute him, and the flaſhings of the fire of hell to torment him. Againe, it makes a man to be an enemie to God: becauſe it accuſeth him to God, and makes him flie from God as Adam did whẽ he had ſinned. Alſo it makes a man to be his owne enemie, in that it doth cauſe him to lay violent hands vpon himſelfe, and become his owne hangman, or his owne cut-throat. And on the contrarie, a good conſcience is a mans beſt friend: when all men intreat him hardly, it wil ſpeak faire and comfort him: it is a continual

feast, and a paradise vpon earth. V. The scripture sheweth that they which neuer seeke for good cōsciēce, haue terrible ends. For either they die blocks, as Nabal did; or they die desperate, as Cain, Saul, Achitophel, Iudas. VI. We must consider often the terrible day of iudgement, in which euery man must receiue according to his doings. And that we may then be absolued, the best way is to seeke for a good conscience: for if our conscience be euill, and condemne vs in this life, God will much more condemne vs. And wheras we must passe through three iudgemēts: the iudgement of men, the iudgemēt of our cōscience, & the last iudgement of God: we shal neuer be strengthened against them and cleared in them all, but by the seeking of a good cōscience.

§ 2. Mans second dutie to keep good conscience.

After that man hath got good conscience, his second dutie is to keepe it. And as in gouerning the shippe on the sea, the pilot holding the helme in his hand, hath alwaies an eye to the compasse: so we likewise in the ordering of our liues and conuersations, must alwaies haue a speciall regard to the conscience.

That we may keepe good conscience, we must doe two things; auoide the impediments thereof, and vse conuenient preseruatiues.

Impediments of good conscience, are either in vs or forth of vs. In vs, our owne sinnes and cor-

corruptions. When mens bodies lie deade in the earth, there breed certaine wormes in them whereby they are conſumed. For of the fleſh come the wormes which conſume the fleſh: but vnles we take great heed, out of the ſinns & corruptions of our hearts, there wil breed a worme a thouſand folde more terrible, euen the *worme of conſcience* that neuer dieth, which wil in a lingering maner waſt the conſcience, the ſoule, & the whole man, becauſe he ſhal be alwaies dying & neuer dead. Theſe ſinnes are ſpecially three; Ignorance, vnmortified affectiõs, worldly luſts.

Touching the firſt, namely ignorance, it is a great and vſuall impediment of good conſcience. For when the minde erreth or miſconceiueth, it doth miſlead the conſcience, and deceiue the whole man. The way to auoide this impediment is, to doe our indeauour that we may daily increaſe in the knowledge of the word of God, that it may dwell in vs plentifully. To this ende we muſt pray with Dauid, that he would open our eyes, that we might vnderſtand the wonders of his law: and withall we muſt daily ſearch the ſcriptures for vnderſtanding, as men vſe to ſearch the mines of the earth for gold ore, Prov. 2. 4. Laſtly, we muſt labour for ſpiritual wiſedõ, that we may haue the right vſe of Gods word in euery particular actiõ: that

being by it directed we may discerne what we may with good conscience do or leaue vndone.

The second impediment, is vnstaied and vnmortified affections, which if they may haue their swinge, as wild horses ouerturne the chariot with men and all, so they ouerturne & ouer carrie the iudgement & conscience of man: and therfore when they beare rule, good cōscience takes no place. Now to preuent the danger that comes hereby, this course must be followed. When we would haue a sword or a knife not to hurt our selues or others, we turne the edge of it. And so, that we may preuent our affections from hurting and annoying the conscience, we must turne the course of them, by directing them from our neighbours to our selues & our owne sinnes, or by inclining them to God and Christ. For example: choller and anger directs it selfe vpon euery occasion against our neighbour, and thereby greatly indamageth the conscience. Now, the course of it is turned, when we begin to be displeased and to be angry with our selues for our owne sinnes. Our loue set vpon the world is hurtfull to the conscience, but when we once begin to set our loue on God in Christ, and to loue the blood of Christ aboue all the world, then contrariwise it is a furtherance of good conscience.

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The third impediment is worldly luſtes, that is, the loue and exceeding deſire of riches, honors, pleaſures. Euery man is as Adam, his good conſcience is his paradiſe; the forbidden fruite is the ſtrong deſire of theſe earthly things; the ſerpent is the olde enemy the deuill: who if hee may be ſuffered to intangle us with the loue of the world, will ſtraight way put us out of our paradiſe, and barre vs from all good conſcience. The remedy is to learne the leſſon of Paul, Philip. 4. 12. which is, in euery eſtate in which God ſhall place vs, to be content; eſteeming euermore the preſent condition the beſt for us of all. Now that this leſſon may be learned wee muſt further labour to be reſolued of Gods ſpeciall prouidence towards vs in euery caſe and condition of life: and when we haue ſo well profited in the ſchoole of Chriſt, that we can ſee and acknowledge Gods providence and goodneſſe, as well in ſickneſſe as in health, in pouerty as in wealth, in hunger as in fulnes, in life as in death, we ſhall be very well content, whatſoeuer any way befalls unto us.

The preſeruatiues of good conſcience are two. The firſt is to preſerue and cheriſh that ſauing faith whereby we are perſwaded of our reconciliation with God in Chriſt, for this is the roote of good conſcience as hath bene ſhewed:

now

now this faith is cherished and confirmed by the daily exercises of inuocation and repentãce, which be, to humble our selues, to bewaile and to confesse our sinnes to God, to condemne our selues for them, to pray for pardon & strength against sinne, to praise God & giue him thanks for his daily benefits. Now by the unfained & serious practise of these duties, repentance and faith are daily renued and confirmed. The second preseruatiue is the maintaining of the righteousnesse of a good conscience: which righteousnesse (as I haue said) is nothing els but a constant endeauor and desire to obey the will of God in all things. That this righteousnesse may be kept to the end, we must practise three rules. The first is, that wee are to carry in our hearts *a purpose neuer to sinne against God in any thing: for where a purpose is of committing any sinne wittingly and willingly, there is neither good faith nor good conscience. The second is to walke with God, as Enoch did, Genes. 5. v. 24. which is, to order the whole course of our liues as in the presence of God, desiring to approoue all our doings euen unto him. Now this perswasion that wheresoeuer we are, we do stand in the presence of God, is a notable meanes to maintaine sincerite. Genes. 17. v. 1. *I am God all-sufficient, vvalke before me*

**Conse. bona non stat cum proposito peccandi.*

me andbe perfect: And the want of this is the occasion of many offences: as Abraham saide, *Because I thought, surely the feare of God is not in this place; they will slay me for my wiues sake.* Gen.20.11. The third rule is, carefully to walke in our particular callings, doing the duties thereof to the glory of God, to the good of the common wealth and the edification of the Church; auoiding therein fraud, covetousnesse, and ambition, which cause men oftentimes to set their consciences on the tenters, and make them stretch like cheverill.

Thus we see how good conscience may be preserued. Reasons to induce vs hereunto are many. I. Gods straight commandement. 1. Tim. 1. v.19. *Keepe faith and good conscience*. And Prover. 4.23. *Keepe thine heart vvith all diligence*. II. The good conscience is the most tender part of the soule like to the apple of the eye; which beeing pearced by the least pinne that may be, is not onely blemished, but also looseth his sight. Therefore as God doeth to the eye, so must wee deale with the conscience. God giues to the eye certaine liddes of flesh, to defende and couer it from outwarde iniuries: and so must wee vse meanes to auoide, whatsoeuer may offend or annoy conscience. III. Manifold benefits redound

unto

vnto us by keeping good conſcience. Firſt ſo long as we haue care to keepe it, we keepe and enioy all other gifts of Gods ſpirit. Good conſcience and the reſt of Gods graces are as a paire of turtle dowes, when the one feeds the other feedeth, when the one likes not the other likes not, when the one dies the other dies: ſo where good conſcience is maintained, there are many other excellent giftes of God flouriſhing: and where conſcience decayes, they alſo decay. Againe good conſcience giues alacrity vnto vs & boldneſſe in calling on Gods name. 1. Ioh. 3. 21. *If our heart condemne vs not, we haue boldneſſe towardes God.* Thirdly it makes vs patient in affliction and comforts vs greatly: and when by reaſon of the grievouſneſſe of our affliction, we are conſtrained to kneele on both knees & take up our croſſe, regenerate conſcience as a ſweete companion layes too his ſhoulder, and helpes to beare one end of it. Laſtly when none can comfort vs, it will be an amiable comforter and a friend ſpeaking ſweetely vnto vs in the very agony and pang of death. IV. Not to preſerue the conſcience without ſpot is the way to deſperation. It is the pollicie of the deuill to vſe meanes to caſt the conſcience into the ſleepe of ſecurity, that he may the more eaſily bring men to his owne deſtruction. For as diſeaſes, if they

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be long neglected become incurable: so the cõscience much and often wounded admitts no comfort. Neither will it alwaies boote a man after many yeres to say at the last cast, Lord be mercifull to me; I haue sinned. Though some be receiued to mercy in the time of death, yet farre more perish in desperation, that liued in their sinnes wittingly & willingly against their owne conscience. Pharao, Saul, and Iudas cried all *peccavi*, I haue sinned against God; yet Pharao is hardened more & more & perisheth, Saul goeth on in his sinnes and despaireth, Iudas made away him-selfe. And no maruell, for the multitude of sinnes oppresse the conscience and make the heart to ouerflowe with such a measure of griefe, that it can fasten no affiance in the mercy of God. Lastly they that shall neglect to keepe good conscience, procure many hurtes, and dangers, and iudgements of God to themselues. When a ship is on the sea, if it be not well gouerned, or if there be a breach made into it, it drawes water and sinkes: and so both men and wares and all in likelihood are cast away. Now, we all are as passengers, the worlde is an huge sea through which we must passe: our shippe is the conscience of euery man. 1. Tim. 1. 19. & 3.12. the wares are our religion and saluation and all other giftes of God. Therefore it

stands

ſtands vs in hand to be alwaies at the helme, and to carry our ſhip with as even a courſe as poſsibly we can, to the entended port of happineſſe, which is the ſaluation of our ſoules. But if ſo be it we grow careleſſe, and make breaches into the ſhippe of conſcience by ſuffering it to daſh upon the rockes of ſinne, it is a thouſand to one, that we in the end ſhall caſt away our ſelues and all we haue. And in the meane ſeaſon, as conſcience decayes, ſo proportionally all grace and goodneſſe goes from vs: Gods commaundements begin to be vile unto vs; the knowledge thereof, as alſo faith, hope, and the invocation of Gods name decay. Experience sheweth that men of excellent gifts through the vſing of bad conſcience, loſe them all. *And therefore God for his mercye ſake, graunte vs grace, to be careſull mower whoſ lieſſ* I N I S. *to gette ar keepe a good Conſiencie vntill it ſhall pleaſe God to*

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Pag. 4. lin. 11. put in theſe words. *Opinion iudgeth a thing to be probable or contingent.* pag. 16. l. 12. III. *Caution.* p. 17. l. 19. *the brother.* p. 20. l. 21. *leaſt.* p. 43. l. 25. *weake.* p. 45. l. 3. for *he*, read, *it.* p. 53. l. 19. *Cangre.* p. 127. l. 6. for *invincible*, read, *imminent.* p. 150. for *ſeemes*, read, *ſerves.* p. 156. in the margin, *renatis.*

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A second errata is pasted on the last page of the original text, covering the errata shown on the preceding photostat page.